


THE JAZZ AND NEW MUSIC MAGAZINE

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# WI RE



THE BEAT GENERATION **Dave Brubeck Lenny Bruce**  
**Sonny Rollins William Burroughs Shirley Clarke**



# BE Bop!



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# WIRE MAGAZINE

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"I can definitely say that music won't stop. It  
will continue to go forward." CHARLIE

PARKER, 1953.



## COVER:

Everton, Parks and  
Arefin at the 100 Club  
in the wee small hours  
framed by a boat/Nick  
White

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THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO THE LATE BRIAN GYSIN

COURTNEY PINE

*Journey To The Urge Within*

*His Debut Album*



Thankyou for the 'Best Newcomer' Accolade in the Wire Awards.

● JUP5 9545  DC F 9545 CD C 113 9545

As we approach the end of one of the strongest jazz years in the UK, it might seem churlish to raise a questioning note. But we are obliged to wonder just how well 'jazz' is doing here.

Newly-sired pundits have been championing jazz's fresh new health over a great deal of media time. Jazz collections have been a feature of major record companies' reissue programmes like never before; *Get Wise!* even purported to give us a new jazz compilation. Jazz DJs have plundered 30 years of music in search of a new perfect beat. We have seen a token jazz revival feature in almost every magazine on the stand. But something is not quite right.

A hungry baby like British jazz still needs the right diet. Gorged on instantaneous media attention, our infant new jazz can look very shaky on its feet. The whole new jazz scene – it's hardly a movement, with the country itself pulled apart by recession – is already rife with contradictions and different reasons to be.

There *is* more young jazz here than there has been for three decades, and the people we've been talking about all year are a vital show of health. Most of them just want to get on and play. But the glare of the music business won't leave it at that, and a rolling bandwagon can run people over too.

Two things in particular make cause for concern. The insistence on whipping together every kind of 'ethnic' rhythm under a jazz heading is doing the music very few favours. Jazz isn't samba, the same way that samba isn't jazz. The great global soup of danceable rhythms is becoming a confusion, not a force against snobbery. Pan-cultural crossovers are fine when they don't obscure the spirit and dignity of the music's root. Suddenly, everything seems clouded.

This is the talk that gets us called 'elitist'. Quite the reverse. In fact, it's the speakers of the revival (a wrong but useful word) that are forging a new elitism. Jazz is not only Blakey, Morgan and Nascimento: it's also Leo Smith, Martial Solal and Barbara Donald. But what room is being made for them and their work? A new conservatism is at work in the core of this return to jazz – as if it's wrong to be too serious about listening, to want to be literate about the music.

I am not interested in a jazz reawakening that has no space for Albert Ayler. If we do not accept the extremes and difficulties of the music, the interest is worth nothing. The new barriers must be destroyed at once. R.D. COOK



## Miles Returns

MILES DAVIS will play three concerts in London in November to coincide with his first album on WEA, *Tutu*, reviewed last month. The dates, at Wembley Conference Centre, are Nov 16th, (2 shows) and Nov 17th. Tickets are on sale now at Wembley's usual outlets. Ticket information on (01) 385 5313.

## Archive And Improvise

LONDON'S NATIONAL SOUND Archive has some interesting events coming up. On November 13th they have 'Life After The Event' which discusses the recording of improvised jazz. Derek Bailey, David Toop and Steve Noble, representatives from 'three generations' of British improvisers, consider the value of sound recordings to their work. A selection of the archive's extensive improvised music tapes will also be discussed. The event starts at 7.30pm at 29 Exhibition Rd, London SW7. Tickets are £2. Info tel. (01) 589 6603.

## THYC opens shop

A SERIES OF music workshops at Tower Hamlets Youth Centre began recently on Thursday evenings from 6pm-9pm. Professional tuition is offered to people of all abilities in various styles of music with particular emphasis on jazz. Details from R. Westcott at the centre on (01) 790 5504.

## Film Festival Jazz

THIS YEAR'S London Film Festival includes its usual excellent support for jazz in the movies. Besides a screening of Bertrand Tavernier's *Round Midnight* on 17 November, there are shows for Robert Muggs's *Saxophone Calais* with Sonny Rollins at the Barbican on 14 November (6.15 and 8.30); and Frank Gilroy's jazz fiction *The Gig* on 26 November at the NFT (2.30 and 8.45). Ring 01-437 4355 for more details.



The Westbrooks in their usual neat order

## Westbrook-Rossini

FOR THEIR LATEST jazz entertainment, Kate and Mike Westbrook have drawn on themes from the ever-popular operas of Rossini. A new group will embark on an extensive European tour and will record a live double LP at the Zurich Jazz Festival, to be released by hat ART next year.

The full list of gigs is: Prague Festival (26 Oct), Paris Festival (31), Montpellier Theatre (5 Nov), Montlucon (6), Bourges (7), Mulhouse (8), Zurich Festival (9), Frankfurt (13), Strasbourg (14), Albi (18), Boedaux (20 & 22).

## T & CC: Major Events

THE TOWN AND Country Club in London is presenting a series of concerts in October/November. On 27th October there will be the only UK appearance of the great Paris Reunion Band, an all-star line-up featuring Nat Adderley, Woody Shaw, Nathan Davis, Joe Henderson, Grachan Moncur III, Kenny Drew, Jimmy Woode and Idris Muhammad. On November 3rd, T & CC sees the return of Airmo and Flora Purim. The Brazilian mood is retained on Nov 15th when Hermento Pascal will perform. Ticket information can be obtained from The Town and Country Club, 9-17 Highgate Rd, London NW5.

## Sonny Rollins

THE GREAT TENDRON returns to Britain for a London one-off appearance on 2 November at Fairfield Halls, Croydon; box office number is 01-688 9291. Sonny will also be making a personal appearance for the London Film Festival screening of Robert Muggs's new movie about his life.

## La Rhumba Continua

DOMINIQUE FRIDM the Bass Clef starts a new series of Salsa gigs in addition to her regular Bass Clef Friday nights. The venue is Mayfairs, Dover Street Wine Bar, W1. The club starts on Saturday November 15th, from 9.30pm-3am.

## Huddersfield: Serious

THE HUDDERSFIELD Contemporary Music Festival (17th-26th November) will feature a host of international names this year. International soloists, ensembles & composers, music from 11 countries, 6 orchestras, dance, jazz and exhibitions will all feature over the week. For a complete programme of events call (0484) 22288 ext 2103. See also Max Harrison's column this month.

## Motian commotion

SEVERAL OUTSTANDING gigs at London's Bass Clef this month. The Paul Motian Trio, with Bill Frisell and Joe Lovano, play their only London club date at the Clef on 23 and 27 November (see Club Dates for other regional gigs). Louis Stewart makes a couple of rare London appearances at the club on 4 and 5 November, and the remarkable free-form funk outfit Slickaphonics (with Ray Anderson and Mark Helius) play their sole club date at the Clef on the 13th. To complete a very guitar-oriented month at the club there's an appearance by powerful French freebassist Patrice Meyer on the 2nd.

## Animate-Syncopate

FANS OF ANIMATION should make every effort to catch a remarkable programme of rare short films currently touring the country. Compiled by Jayne Pilling of the BFI, it goes under the title *Animatone: Syncopation* cartoons and animated films and videos all with a musical theme. Betty Boop, Warner Bros' classic *Three Little Pigs*, Len Lye, Cucumber Studios, John Hubley and many more are featured. The programme shows at London's Everyman Cinema on 2, 4, 6 & 8 November and then moves to Cambridge Arts Cinema (11-12), Watwick Arts Centre (20-22) and Chapter Arts Cardiff (2 Dec). Further venues are to be arranged.

## Futurities Now

DANCE, PAINTING, POETRY and music come together in the first collaboration of CMN and Dance Umbrella, Futurities. The performance - with music by Steve Lacy - tours the country this month at the following venues: London Bloomsbury Theatre (4-5 Nov), Manchester Opera Theatre (7-8), Stratford Swan Theatre (9), Mold Theatre Clwyd (11), Liverpool Bluecoat Arts Centre (12), Bristol Arncliffe (14-15), Huddersfield Polytechnic (17-18).

# Ah! Biscoe!

SAXMAN CHRIS BISCOE adds Italian trombonist Danilo Terenzi to his regular quintet for a national tour beginning on 12 November. An album to coincide with the tour will be released on the specially formed Walking Wig label. Joining Biscoe and Terenzi are trumpeter Ray Manderson, bassist Mick Hurren and drummer Dave Barry. The full tour schedule is: Southport Arts Centre (12), Cambridge Man In The Moon (14), Birmingham Triangle Arts Centre (16), Stockton On Tees Dovecot Arts Centre (18), Cardiff Four Bars Inn (19), Cheltenham Queens Hotel (20), Norwich Arts Centre (22), Southend Cliffs Pavilion (23).

# Avon Moves On

LAST SPRING a meeting of Avon-based jazz musicians and promoters discussed the state of the jazz scene in the county and aspirations for the future. 18 volunteers formed two working groups - one to consider jazz education and the other to consider issues of performance and promotion.

In October, group one ran a series of workshops which were highly successful and plans for the continuation of these can be obtained from Nod Knowles on (0392) 218368. The second practical development comes from discussions held between the performance and promoters working group and The Arncliffe Gallery. The two are joining forces to promote extra jazz concerts at regular intervals. A wider spectrum of jazz styles will also be heard at the Gallery. Details will be released shortly about concerts at the Arncliffe. Anyone living in the Avon area who is interested in this encouraging development can contact, once again, Nod Knowles at South West Jazz.

# Your Christmas Wire

NEXT MONTH'S *Wire* will be a special double issue for December

and January. It will be the largest *Wire* in history and will have a cover price of £1.95; we advise that you order early for what's going to be a collector's item. Subscribers please note: this issue will count as two and will be numbered 34-35.

# Club Dates

NEWCASTLE Corner House  
(9th) Sean Tracey/Tony Coe Duo  
(10th) Phil Guy  
(18th) WASO  
(23rd) Tommy Chase Quartet  
NOTTINGHAM Manor  
(20th) Steve Lane's Red Hot Peppers  
NEWBURY Art Centre  
(30th Oct) Ti Jazz  
EXETER Art Centre  
(31st Oct) Ti Jazz  
ALDERSHOT West End Theatre  
(1st) Ti Jazz  
MALMESBURY Jazz Society  
(29th) Chris Blount's Jazz Band  
SWINDON Links Centre  
(6th) Coe Oxley Tracey Lawrence  
CHESTERFIELD College  
(28th) Gary Boyle & John Etheridge Band  
MANCHESTER Band On The Wall  
(6th) Charlie Byrd Trio  
(11th) Phil Guy  
(12th) District Six  
(13th) Hermeto Pascoal  
(18th) Guy Clarke  
(20th) Gail Force  
(24th) Paul Morian Trio  
SHEFFIELD Leadmill  
(12th) Courtney Pine  
(16th) Phil Guy  
(19th) Gail Force  
(26th) Tal Farlow  
COLCHESTER Arts Centre  
(6th) Kessel Trio  
(8th) Patrice Meyer  
(13th) Clark Tracey Quintet  
(19th) Phil Guy  
(22nd) Cutting Edge  
(27th) Strata  
FROME The Merlin  
(31st Oct) Ronnie Scott Quintet  
(27th Nov) Mister B plays Basie  
PLYMOUTH Theatre Royal

(10th) Georgie Fame  
PAIGNTON Festival Theatre  
(14th) Georgie Fame  
BATH The Ram  
(2nd) Riverside Jazzmen  
(9th) Severn Jazzmen  
(10th) Zimmer Two  
EXETER Art Centre  
(1st) Norma Winstone/John Taylor Group  
(29th) Pinski Zoo  
TAUNTON Anchor Inn  
(9th) Ironbridge Jazzband  
(23rd) Jumpin Jive  
YEovil Bell Inn  
(9th) Survival String Band  
(30th) Richard Smith Blues Band  
WARWICK University  
(27th Oct) Loose Tubes  
NOTTINGHAM Old Vic  
(29th Oct) Coe Oxley & Co.  
(5th) District Six  
(12th) Phil Guy  
(19th) Clark Tracey Quintet  
(26th) No Quarter  
DERBY Brownes  
(2nd) District Six  
(9th) Fred Baker  
(16th) Andrew Stanton Quartet  
(23rd) Horn Web  
(30th) Expressions  
OXFORD Randolph Hotel  
(28th) Paul Morian Trio  
BRIDGWATER Art Centre  
(26th) Spirit Level  
BRISTOL Moon Club  
(6th) Bullie  
(13th) Ghosts  
(20th) Focus on Sanity  
(27th) Keith Tippett & Andy Shepherd  
BIRMINGHAM Triangle  
(2nd) Coe Oxley Tracey Lawrence  
(15th) Bongo Go Disco  
(16th) Chris Biscoe  
(30th) Don Weller  
ASTON Bartons Arms  
(31st Oct) Bobby Wellins  
(7th) Ronnie Ross  
(14th) Keith Tippett & Paul Dunmall  
(21st) Tal Farlow  
London  
LMC  
(2nd) John Russell, Peter

Urpeth, Nick Smith  
ALBANY EMPIRE  
(2nd) Jazz Defektors  
(3rd) Sweet Honey In The Rock  
(9th) Pyewacket & Friends  
100 CLUB  
(31st Oct) Jim Mullen's Meantime  
(21st) Juice On The Loose  
(28th) Dave Kelly Blues Band  
(29th) Jo Ann Kelly & Terry Smith Blues Band  
RONNIE SCOTT'S  
(27th Oct-8th Nov)  
Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers  
(10th Nov-1 week)  
Lee Konitz  
(17th Nov-1 week)  
Buddy Rich  
(24th Nov-1 week)  
Ray Brown  
BASS CLEF  
(1st) Kabbala  
(7th) Homer's Odyssey & Kalabash  
(11th) Jazz Renegades  
(14th) Holloway Allstars  
(15th) Mamelodi  
(19th) Chevalier Bros & The Bosa Nova Quartet  
(28th) Paz & 4 On 4 Quartet  
LMC  
(30th Oct) Paul Shearman  
Quartet  
(1st Nov) Lapis String Quartet  
WARRINGTON The Studio  
(29th Oct) New Shoes  
(25th Nov) Blue Magnolia Jazz Orchestra  
DURSLEY (GLOS.) Prema  
(21st) Frank Chickens  
(23rd) Rie Yanagisawa & Clive Bell  
CAMBRIDGE Modern Jazz Club  
(31st Oct) District Six  
(7th) Peter Jacobsen Trio  
(14th) Chris Biscoe Sextet  
(21st) Strata  
(28th) Beck/King Quintet  
SOUTHWELL Sarsen's Head  
(14th) Johnny Van Derrick  
BURTON ON TRENT Central Club  
(30th Oct) Blue Magnolia Jazz Orchestra  
(27th Nov) Merseyside Jazz Orchestra

# THE SOUND OF AFRICA

BY MARK SINKER

LAST SEASON'S  
THING: cancelled  
dates and tours.

YOUSOU N'DOUR had to blow out a festival in Amsterdam. All the places on all the planes had already been booked – by other people. SALIF KEITA was able to take his place – so the punters weren't short-changed – but the elaborate logistics of travel bed'n'breakfast are as much of a brake on general progress of the music as the specific reception accorded any particular figure. Zimbabwe's OLIVER MTUKUDZI was set to brave YMCAs, bed-bugs and motorway caffè – he headlines in Harare – until he had to cancel his 15-date British tour when his father died. MAHMOUD AHMED (whose *Ere Mela Mela: Modern Music From Ethiopia* on Crammed Discs seems to have been mentioned two months running now) failed to get permission at the last minute to leave his country to tour Europe. And finally Acts Worldwide were aiming to bring SUPER DJATA over from Mali, but it fell through: I'd like to console you by telling you the title of their LP that was selling well in Amsterdam a little while ago, but I haven't been able to find it (*bylines*, Mark – Ed).

Yousou's broken through into mainstream pop consciousness. Or at least those sections of it who find time for a little catholicity on the side. He joins a fine name-to-drop canon, probably edging past SUNNY ADI off it at last, and will be paraded for a while alongside TROUBLE FUNK, JOHN COLTRANE, RUBEN BLADES maybe. More useful than this cynical smootiness on my part would be a drive to work into the cultural fabric a sophisticated grasp of N'Dour's threats and debts to and from co-Senegalians SUPER DIAMOND, XALAM, BAORAB, No. 1 DE SENEGAL, rival singers like THION SECK, ISMAEL LO, BABA MAL, a Dakar student who appeared in place of the absent MAHMOUD AHMED in Amsterdam... but all these connections are inducing paranoia over here in Hackney tonight, and actually the music I really want to push this month is kind of off-limits: a tape of a rape of a home-cats-only release, *Musique De Burkino Faso Vol. 2*, and I'm reduced to suggesting that you lobby your local backyard indie to hunt it down, ship it over, put it out and back it up, starry-eyed idealists that they surely are (tell them debts on Earth are Brownie Points in Heaven: tell them Burkino Faso used to be called Upper Volta, also).

Starry-eyed idealist indie Globestyle's VERMILION SANDS wasn't so together over the phone that I could actually pass on details of their long-awaited release of Madagascar Music (which will be long out by the time you get this anyway): but with the Museum of Mankind (Burlington Gdns W1) staging a huge exhibition of all things MALAGASY from November 26, and Acts Worldwide bringing over Music From Madagascar at the Camden Centre (December 6) and elsewhere round the country (01 485 8262 for details), it looks as if large islands east of Africa may very well be this season's thing. (Let's hear it for ZANZIBAR, from where my sister phoned Ilington this very morning...)

# IN A LATIN GROOVE

BY SUE STEWARD

What WIRE's award party revealed to me more than anything was

that the current jazz fad has bred a crop of arrogant, supercilious people out of a section of the music-loving population, who a few years ago were content with pogoing and sighing to Factory records. My slanging march

with one particularly virulent ignoramus was very unsettling: as she taunted, argued and abused the Brazilian dj, TONY, doing his damndest to operate the decks, I decided to act as decoy, only to be told in no uncertain terms that hardly any of the music tonight was jazz, and that these people don't deserve to call themselves "Jazz DJ's" or knew anything about it. Luckily not everyone felt the same: by 5.30am, the third wind blew and suddenly out of nowhere about 40 of us were dancing to an incredible live-mix of sambatucadas, which Tony was interlocking for dear life, while GABRIELA-chief EDNA, who programmes the music loosely in advance, held a cat torch aloft for him to see the grooves. BRAZIL PROJECT who'd driven from a gig in Hampshire to hear the Brazilian sounds, led everyone in some frantic clapping and footwork.

Apart from The Night at the Scala, what's been happening? That should read, in one case, what hasn't been happening? Just as the tears of sympathy for LOFTY have dried off, the UK chapter of IRAKERE's fan club had to cope with the news that the band were not doing their 3 weeks at RONNIE SCOTT'S. Whatever the reasons – and the blame seems to lie heavily in HAVANA – it's the knock-on effect that I dread. Just as London promoters have learned that our cold war cousins in Cuba are good to do business with and they produce great music, they bungle. Let's hope the Cubans tighten their bureaucracy and the promoters don't lose their bottle.

The live Latin scene is in a bit of a hiatus as regards visitors, giving the home bands time to stretch out and get noticed. Of those who qualify for this column, BRAZIL PROJECT stand out for me. They incorporate more styles than most working in a Latin vein, and deal out a mean set of BATUCADAS – from percussionists, who if the Mancunian timbales player is typical, are self-taught – from TITO PUNTE's album, of rhythms, "PUNTE IN PERCUSSION".

To compensate for the dearth of live music from overseas, I go back to the classics: RAY BARRETTO's brilliant venture into Latin soul in '66 has been re-mastered on to stereo and re-issued. *Acid* is a topical mixture of the crazy hybrids of the day. "Soul Drummers" with its manic/cold-English vocals urging on Ray's conga solo, and the superb track which reveals the truth behind Barretto's "Hard Hands" nickname. If you want to hear improvised interplay between percussionists, start here. Anything available unfolds new surprises about this man's musical adventures.

Another conga player whose careers wove in and out of the American jazz scene is MONGO SANTAMARIA. *Swarmertine* (Pablo, '81) is a record of the Montreux concert with DEZZY (a Cubanophile, if ever there was one), and TOOTS THIELEMANS. The long, lazy title track is an epic; while "Mambo Mongo" is an uptempo version of William Allen's tribute to the little man which surges through serial solos from Dizzy and Mongo held on loose reins by MILTON HAMILTON's piano.

An interest in music cannot be sustained by records alone – as The New Jazz Scene is discovering. Luckily Latin music does not need that: it is a world of adventurers, experimenters and live bands. The music is never in danger of stasis. LATIN MUSIC – not jazz – is the music of FUTURES.





# CLUBLAND JIVE

BY LYN CHAMPION

at RONNIE's was disparate. That's the best word for it, saved only by a first-rate double-barrelled sax attack from the front. I quaffed my almost priceless bottle of worst plonk and dreamed about his dad playing with CHARLIE PARKER.



Faith returned with TOMMY CHASE though. Impeccable in both strides and strokes at the first ever JAZZ NIGHT OUT courtesy of GILLES PETERSON's Radio London show MAD ON JAZZ. It's a grand old music hall, the TOWN AND COUNTRY CLUB, and seeing it bubbling over with dancing youth said it's straight ahead for jazz in London. TEAM TEN, plus

his hep-cat Serge Clerc character saxman) with some wild musical movements and vocals from the JAZZ DEFEKTORS. The crowd was wild – the jazz was hard and the DEFEKTORS were taking no prisoners whatsoever.

Three years ago Manchester was the heart – and BERLIN was a hot dance jazz club. It's over to a veteran to say what's cooking in the North-West now. Are you ready? Let's take a FUSION INTRUSION with DEAN . . .

Jazz, in sunny downtown Manchester, is an integral part of the city after hours. Since the mid-70s explosions of JAZZBREAKS at everywhere from inner-city school youth clubs to grander funk'n soul venues like the RITZ and later the famous BERLIN. Jazz has developed into a natural part of the town's sounds. For a decade or so, home-grown daddies (and uniquely, hep young women) have twirled and shuffled to the sound of their own percussive gurus, searched basements for favoured Latin exponents, and been what no media exercise can conceive: a genuine underground jazz-related culture.

In 1986 jazz is as much part of the city as constant rain, football rivalry and chips (with gravy). There's a genuine sense of community among young jazzers, so while KALIMA and the JAZZ DEFEKTORS spread Mancunian stylistics around the globe, conglomerations like BRAZIL



PROJECT – an ever changing informal association – keep the home flyers dancing.

In the clubs, despite the recent inactivity of jazz's own northern prophet COLIN CURTIS, the tunes are played to a constantly appreciative audience unconcerned with fashion.

Even at the huge HACIENDA, that syncopated sound continues (thanks partly to yours truly) to please. On

Saturday night you can hear recent Latin releases like 'Summertime' (Live At Birdland, Tito Rodriguez) and 'Morning' (Sensacion, Tito Puente), older 'Berlin classic' vocalese, like 'Soft Serum Blues' (Sweet Fantasy, Mike Campbell) or 'New York Afternoon' (Keeper Of The Flame, Richie Cole featuring Eddie Jefferson), as well as the R & B-based saxers honking that's in vogue at the moment like 'Hey, Leroy Your Mama's Calling You' (Jimmy Castor) and 'Darin's Mambo' (Arthur Seerling's Pucho Band). At other venues, jazz stalwarts like HEWAN CLARKE are quite likely to throw down a little something that might be down your street.

So if you come clubbing in Manchester, jazz'll never be far away. I

The young Machito, leading his band from the back down

mean even the cabbies play it!

Thanks DEAN old fruit. Our cabbies are all into anarchyism.

## ROUND UP THE USUAL SUSPECTS

BY BIBA KOPF

Utopia  
in crisis?  
Crikey!

Better bring on the dancing girls. Despite its massive dominion the Culture Of Fun is neurotic by nature and its grinning card façade is easily brought tumbling down by the first sign of doubt, even as its supremacy isn't denied any. Operating as engineer of the consent it craves as a mandate for its dictatorial rule, Fun Culture experiences great difficulties with those who withhold it, be they hecklers or systematic wreckers



of joy. Its method of dealing with *refuseniks* is two-fold: seduction and binding opponents in opposition – making the heckler part of the show. Any producer, regardless of intentions, is prone to the former. And the rest are invariably condemned to the impotence of endless abstraction. Of all the *refuseniks* of Fun Culture, LAST FEW DAYS probably confounded its operation most. Emerging at the tail

end of the post-industrial period that constituted rock's most unsettling assault on its citadel, they were certainly the most curious components of the siege. They were seldom seen, rarely heard, yet always present. Their live appearances were scarce – they played more dates in Eastern Europe than in the West. Those who saw them in concert were subjected to a music that vacillated between the thresholds of audibility and pain, performed by a quartet whose appearance toyed with the high profile that characteristics of anonymity – shaven heads, military uniform, monochrome – take on in a Fun Culture where colourful image is all. To flickering film loops of burning buildings they plied dirges put through control filters, distorting classical instrumentation with electronics and voices with megaphone amplification. Their presentations struck unwilling associations with hidden cultural memories and promoted an oddly stimulating mixture of unease and exhilaration in those drawn to their spectacles of disaster.

Just when they were about to make an impression as marked as a gurted building in a new town they seemingly disappeared, leaving nothing behind except torn and peeling cod-evangelist posters scattered across London. Unique in that their soul intention seemed to be the planting of doubt, they had no product to see – the



ultimate *civitas interruptus* in a consumer-oriented Fun Culture of teases and come-ons. But once the doubt took root, they were never quite sure how to cultivate it. Eventually they fractured. Two of them still puzzled how to continue, flirting with a possible name change to LOVELY. In the meantime they've released a glitterstomp 12" 'Too Much Is Not Enough' (Touch/Rough Trade). And now here's a live record mapping their previously invisible period. Called *Pure Spirit And Saliva* (Dead Man's Curve), it's distilled from concerts in Berlin, Maastricht and London from 83–84 and serves as a memoir of their minor, yet intimate apocalypses. Perhaps it comes too late to crack Utopia, but it's brought the dancing girls down with dyspepsia.



Hugh Masekela played a tough, hot set at the Limelight Club in London a few weeks ago as part of a benefit event for Botswana's International School Of Music. After some words of wisdom from Bishop Trevor Huddleston, Masekela's excellent band fired up a ruxedo evening with some of the fire and blood of the cause they're supporting: the school exists to teach and nurture fledgling talent among the young people of Botswana.



These guys look familiar . . . members of Loose Tubes take a packed lunch to a place that should have been serving lunch months ago. The cats were playing a Lament For The Unopened National Jazz Centre, on the site of said premises, still a less than holy mess of rubble and thwarted ambitions in Covent Garden. To date, this is still the only performance to take place there. As the banner said, *Why Are We Waiting?* Still?

## O B I T U A R I E S

### Pepper Adams

1930 - 1986

THE BARITONE SAXOPHONIST Pepper Adams died in September after a long struggle with cancer. The baritone has produced only a few distinctive voices in jazz: Pepper's was one of them. Stylistically, he favoured a point somewhere between the traditional big-voiced swing of Harry Carney and the more fluid and attacking metres of hard bop. He often worked with Donald Byrd in the 50s and

turns up on a number of Blue Note blowing dares, but he was really associated only with himself, working mostly as a freelance for many years. His later records for Muse display a mature, assertive musician who was suspicious of bathos and liked to play hard.

Gary Carner has been collaborating with Pepper on a biography for several years. He asks that if you have any information on the man that you'd like to share, please write to him at: 18 Becker Road, Belmont, MA 02178, USA.

### Teddy Wilson

1912 - 1986

TEDDY WILSON DIED ON JULY 31, a few weeks after his old boss in the Benny Goodman Quartet: only Lionel Hampton now survives from that great outfit. But if that association is likely to be the best-remembered element of Wilson's career, he did much more besides. He consummated his manner and technique very early in his career and remained the same graceful, refined, gentlemanly pianist to the end of his life. The bands he led which backed Billie Holiday in her 30s recordings draw their easy skill and implacable swing from the leader's supervision; 20 years later, he provided the ideal accompaniment for Lester Young to produce some of his best late work (*Verve's Pre And Taddy's*). Another 20 years after that, he was still visiting Britain and performing the finely-struck standard interpretations that defined his music. Perhaps he was simply too consistent on record, for it's hard to denote the 'classic' Wilson LPs: his strength was his subtlety, his urbane sense of expression, and he was never about being sensational. His music was a glittering distillation of the swing era he helped to create as a young man: a master who never felt the need to spell it out.



WIRE'S BRITISH JAZZ AWARDS 1986: THE RESULTS



Peter Ind



Mr Chase and Mr Melly consider



Evan Parker collects, Mari Wilson & John Walters approve



These the cats we hepped



INSTRUMENTALIST Evan Parker

BANDLEADER: Tommy Chase

NEWCOMER Courtney Pine

BEST-DRESSED MUSICIAN: Lol Coxhill

VOCALIST: Norma Winstone &

Alison Moyet

ALBUM: DRIVE, Tommy Chase

JAZZ DJ: Paul Murphy

VENUE (LONDON): The Wag Club

VENUE (REGIONS): Band On The Wall,  
Manchester

PHOTOGRAPHER: Val Wilmer

WIRE'S AWARD FOR SERVICES TO JAZZ WENT TO Peter Ind

SCHLITZ AWARD FOR JAZZ COMPOSITION WENT TO Stan Tracey

HUGE CROWDS FOUND THEIR WAY TO LONDON'S SCALA CINEMA ON September 12 for our BRITISH JAZZ AWARDS for 1986. A fair number of them (mostly those sensible enough to have bought advance tickets) actually found their way in. Celebrities by the dozen mingled with our faithful readers and the dance floor throbbed in time to DAVE HUCKER, BAZ FE JAZZ, SUE STEWARD, MARK WEBSTER and PAUL FERRE. The ceremony was ably presented by JOHN WALTERS and MARI WILSON with EASTENDERS star TOM WATT and GEORGE MELLY helping things along. COURTNEY PINE was conspicuous by his absence but sent CLEVELAND WATKISS along in his place; ALISON MOYET sent a message via her press officer FIONA GRIMSHAW. PAUL MURPHY said he was too busy to turn up, so the even more busy BAZ and GILLES PETERSON collected awards instead. BBC radio and TV were on hand to record the event and R.D. COOK locked up at seven o'clock next morning. Next year? We're thinking about the CAFE ROYAL . . .

"IN TERMS OF THE sociology of playing this music, and the idea of a kind of purity about it, I don't think it's pure at all. I mean, I know the concepts of meta-music a little bit, I've thought about that. And sure it's a meta-music. But it's also sub-music, para-music or sub-music. And then the music in the middle. It's all of these things, so in the end it just ends up as music. It brings its own critique into being when it's played."

John Russell is laughing a bit at these jargon-categories even as he wields them. I'd better take that as a slap on the wrist. For me, there's nothing more excellent than the scope Improvised Music gives for play with the deepest ontologies of sound, words and the world. But it isn't really fair to splash him with all my obsessions: he's not so regularly given space that we've become weary of his own views, I think. I'm drawn to his playing by a flatness in it, a deliberative focus on small-scale event: I like the way I have to use words like 'flatness' or 'dulled' or 'low-key', and actually mean them as compliments if I can. He's determined to achieve communication, but he won't take an easy route. How does an acoustic guitar player with a love of baroque music end up on a hard path like this, John?

"People tend to pick up on styles – and I picked up on the style of sounding weird . . . but then, having made that kind of, if you like, gestural leap, I needed a language or way to deal with that. And I was very lucky to find musicians that had also made that gestural leap that I could admire and work with."

Improvised Music isn't any sort of aggression, for him, and he's less perverse, less wilfully difficult, than many who choose to work in it. He hates, for example, the places it presently has to perform in, is sure that they damage the growth and development of the art. Because, for all that the seediness attracts a peculiar few, it puts a lot of people off.

"It's important to have an audience. What I think's more important about that, though, is that what you can't do is change the message. You can make it as clear as possible, but you can't change it to something else. It might be a difficult thing to say, so that if you have something that's difficult to say, you can't actually turn it into something that's easy to say, but you can make it as clear as possible. I



The trio – Russell, with John Butcher on saxophone and Phil Durrant on trombone and violin – is the most permanent line-up he presently works in. QuasQua is more an event than a group – a coming together in various combinations of a selection of improvising musicians from Europe and the UK (and occasionally the US too – Davey Williamson and LaDonna Smith are not well known here): this year's model was based, for the first time, round the trio with the additional muscle and lung of Paul Lovens and Radu Malfatti.

RUSSELL'S BEEN A constant but almost invisible presence on the British scene for nearly 15 years: more crucial than he's prepared to admit, probably, because he tends to self-effacement in his conversation as (superficially) in his music. He was an early participant in operations at the Little Theatre Club and the Musicians' Cooperative in the 70s, and a founder of the LMC and *Musica* magazine. He doesn't seem to want to over-emphasise his music's value, although his belief in it is

Russell occasionally worries about that. But we're possibly over-stressing the smallness of his sound – it also has unbelievable strength ("I play very quietly, but I hammer shit out of the guitar"); his side of *House Cooking* (Incus 31) is a brutal and instructive solo cracking through an alien palace of splinters, a frighteningly private place.

"Derek Bailey says in his book that improvisation can range from dilettante activity to a lifetime's dedication. And the kind of people that I'm interested in – actually this isn't true, I'm interested in all parts of the spectrum – but when I put a QuasQua group together, usually they're the people that have invested a lifetime's dedication . . . what I want to put them into is a situation where they can hopefully develop some stuff, really, because for me it's about developing existing traditions, and also juxtaposing them in a new way. That's important to QuasQua, development. The way it works in the trio is a real push-pull dialectic, and we have rows about playing. Over the last year we've got to the point where we can actually argue about playing. That's because we see the group as an entity, and that's excellent for me, a good way of working. The same thing applies working with Luc (Houtkamp), and I've recently got to that point with Gunther (Christmann)."

Christmann asked Russell to sit in on his *Varus* project, and Russell's enjoyed it immensely, not least because it gives him a rest from actually having to organise anything. The record (on Moers: another will be out this year) is one of the few he returns to: it features Russell, Christmann, Lovens, Maggie Nicols and Maarten Altena – in this company, Russell's uncompromising style, scratchy dampened chordings, squeaks and scrapes, is given space, for once, to reveal an essential part of its function (curiously close to the

traditional role of the rhythm guitar, interestingly): his playing provides bones or shape to the sound by being the friction surface for other players to keep their footing on . . . well, something like that, anyway: "I thought it was playing with excellent musicians who gave each other respect

for what they were doing . . . and we played some nice places. And got some money for it! You must get people who come up and say, you, you can't really play, can you?"

"Yes, it happens. Normally I say, well, I've just played, and that's enough."

But he's hard to take it equally.

"I can now, actually. It used to get me riled."

## John Russell

HAMMER VERY QUIETLY

A GUITARIST AND ORGANISER EXPLORES A WORLD OF IMPROVISING AND PARA-MUSIC.

BY MARK SINKER

certainly there:

"One of the things I'm quite keen to do, in a way, is just to *present* it – and that's a problem. Because what you want to do is to put the flag up saying 'We're here, doing this. But you don't want the fact that the flag's up to then define what you do.'"

There's maybe a sense in which such unobtrusive determination represents the microscopic world of one man's concern, and

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## LISTEN & YOU'LL SEE

## Ornette Coleman's Prime Time

TOKYO

HAVING BRAVED ONE OF Tokyo's rush hours we arrived at the Shibuya Kokaido. A rare opportunity to hear Prime Time was not to be bypassed on mere financial grounds. Boldly grasping our 5,000 yen – 20 quid – tickets we headed inside, halting briefly to collect a huge silver bag containing freebies from the sponsors. All very intense for 6.30 in the evening.

Organised as part of the Live Under The Sky tour, which promised performances from the Herbie Hancock Quartet, Larry Coryell and Chick Corea, and Al Di Meola, this was apparently the only indoor gig. The auditorium buzzed with anticipation. Most punters there had come straight from work and the slightly less than capacity crowd was a healthy mix of 60s swingers schooled on Ornette's *Free Jazz* and younger, more recent converts to that harmolodic hybrid, Prime Time.

Things start early in Tokyo and right on the stroke of seven Prime Time strolled on stage. Their only ever London concert had swollen to mythic proportion in my memory banks and I felt well prepared for the inevitable onslaught. They rumbled into action like an express train. The trap drums of Kamir Sabir shook violently under his explosive percussive attacks, while his counterpart Denardo Coleman literally danced on his stool as he waded into his synthesised kit. Once joined with the weighty, rolling bass lines, spiced with flickers of

guitar, you were pinned back into your seat. Ornette appeared, put the horn to his lips and we had lift-off.

The excitement of that initial assault was unfortunately whittled away by fluctuating sound quality that made it frustratingly difficult to differentiate between the individual musicians on stage. By the fifth composition the sheer relentlessness of the set was in danger of producing a mind-numbing sameness. Only Ornette's alto and the odd outing on trumpet – his violin didn't work – cut through the muddy mix.

Maybe it was Ornette's change of suit that did it but the opener to the second set was a new ball game. You could actually hear Denardo Coleman, and offset against Sabir he was creating totally new rhythmic textures. Charles Ellerbee and the supremely immovable Nix weaved their own web of fragmented guitar licks amid a wild sea of percussion, each choosing their moment to add a splash of colour to the jagged soundscapes woven by Ornette's spiky alto.

The session was beginning to boil and the audience knew it. More rhythmic variety and shifts of tempo and mood seemed to exist. Denardo is one dangerous percussionist and he was dropping some distinctive,

"spongi" beats that would have gone straight to Sly Dunbar's head. The basses lured us into each composition with some radical, ruff, funky solos and continued to surprise with some devious, electronically concocted sounds. But Coleman is ever present – The Master. As soon as you could grasp a fleeting melody he'd whisk you away on a furious improvisational round trip. The man just blew and blew. His stamina was staggering.

Of the 15 compositions played during the two-hour set, only "Variations On A Symphony" was instantly recognisable, and as Ornette is short on the verbals I couldn't give any clue as to the titles of any others. By the end of the set titles seemed irrelevant anyway. With Denardo at the helm they streamed into the encore and I was still reeling to a slice of Def Jam meets New Jazz as I staggered off to a nearby bar.

Paul Bradshaw

## Brecon Jazz Festival POWYS

THE CENTRE OF Brecon is virtually unchanged since the day of the daguerreotype, whose images fill the souvenir shops. Out-

wardly, the only concession to the 80s is a church notice-board that proudly proclaims services in Welsh and English. But once a year Brecon lets its hair down, dons bunting and banners and joins the parade of jazz that starts on a Friday afternoon and finally subsides in a beery haze late on Sunday night.

Over the week-end, over 50,000 people came to see over 200 jazz musicians ply their craft in pubs, clubs and three public bandstands throughout the town. Quite simply jazz takes over, and despite the more senior of its citizens who view proceedings with something-ought-to-be-done-about-it expressions from behind twitching net curtains, Brecon Jazz is well on its way to becoming one of the major jazz events in the UK. Notionally subtitled "New Orleans In The Beacons", Brecon Jazz is far more than just a festival of trad and dixieland. To be sure, that's what attracts so many visitors, but they will surely have gone away with a clearer idea of what jazz is all about than ever they could from radio or TV. On offer was mainstream and bop, free-jazz and jazz-rock as well as the state-of-the-art, represented by Dave Liebman's Quest.

Early on Saturday, the yin

Ornette in his prime (time)



and yang of authentic mainstream, Al Grey and Buddy Tate circumscribed their familiar repertoire of standards, ballads and blues with honesty and commitment. Meanwhile Alan Skidmore was unveiling his new quarter. After the self-indulgent Coltrane-influenced Tenor Tonic it was something of a revelation. Undersprung by a highly competent Irish bassist and drummer, Skidmore has paired himself with trumpeter Gary Barker and has moved from competition to co-operation and an altogether higher plane. But continued exposure to the new tone-colours began to blur into monochrome without a piano.

A set by guitarist Frank Evans followed, who has drunk at the well of Wes Montgomery where others have merely gargled. The fleet style of his mentor has been personalised with aggressive pick-playing and unexpected *sforzando* chords in a compelling and articulate straight-ahead style. Brecon Jazz is also a forum for musicians from around the Principality, and there is no doubt that the standard is uniformly high. Impressive were Dylan Fowler's Q with Dick Roberts on piano and Cumulus with saxist Eric Clarke.

Frank Lowe has been slowly descending to earth since his high altitude energy screaming with Rashad Ali and Alice Coltrane, and his set with Louis Moholo and Marcio Mattos was of considered angularity as he juxtaposed knotty problems from the bottom of his tenor with flighty fancies from under the palm-keys. The European Jazz Quartet is

another group of free-jazzmen in from the cold, with saxophonist Gerd Dudek, pianist Rob Van den Broeck and bassist Ali Haurand who were spurred to great deeds by the iconoclastic drumming of Tony Oxley. Urgent and exciting, Oxley is a magnificent drummer when he chooses to play time – even on his perverse bric-a-brac drumkit. Each limb is totally independent of the other, creating polyrhythms of dense complexity. Nathan Davis, who impressed with the Paris Reunion Band last year, made sure his reputation was indelibly printed on everyone's consciousness late on Saturday night.

The festival highlight, however, came on Sunday with the first and only UK appearance of Quest. A festival coup by the organisers, Quest emerged from the Dave Liebman-Richie Beirach collaboration Lookout Farm. It evolved through a quintet with Randy Brecker on trumpet to its present quartet form in 1981, and currently has Ron McClure on bass and Billy Hart on drums. Liebman is a genuine virtuoso on soprano sax. He has a brilliant technical command that permits him to rattle off blisteringly fast runs of bewildering complexity which he alternates with long, sinewy lines with microtonal deviations in pitch. Beirach is often the straight-man to Liebman, whom he frames with pensive, almost non-jazz meditations that suddenly give way to structures of rapid tempo changes. "Picasso" was a stunning display of group and solo interaction that evolved from pastoral beginnings

through furious tempos that showcased Liebman's soprano. "Tender Mercies" had an over-the-shoulder glance to *Lookout Farm*; a meditation of delicate interaction and rapport with Beirach heading for the open spaces. It was a shame the BBC, who were on hand to record some of the concerts, didn't catch what is really a major, if little known, jazz group of the 80s.

Stuart Nicholson

## Carey and Lurrie Bell

HIGH WYCOMBE  
NAG'S HEAD

TO DESCRIBE CAREY BELL as the world's greatest blues harmonica player, while possibly true, is regrettably less meaningful than it would have been 25 years ago: to be number one in a field of about three serious contenders is not necessarily a particularly meritorious achievement. However, to create an atmosphere of excitement and near-euphoria in a tatty pub back room on a Sunday lunchtime in High Wycombe is an achievement which ought to secure for its perpetrator a place in the next New Year honours list. That's what Carey and his band managed to do with no apparent difficulty.

Backed by his son Lurrie on Flying Vee guitar, plus the sympathetic Junkyard Angels rhythm section, he overcame a capricious PA system and post-Saturday-night jadedness to produce one of the most satisfying and entertaining sets of

Chicago blues I've heard for years.

Carey, ex-Muddy Waters sideman and now in his prime at 50, played with a power, fluency and inventiveness which were a joy to behold. There's a lot of Little Walter in his style, but he's got his own bag of tricks too, punctuating his warm, earthy vocals with hatp sounds which are probably scientifically impossible. Having blown his and everyone else's cobwebs away with the rocking instrumental "Ballbuster", he mixed original numbers with Chi-town standards, notably a strong selection of Muddy Waters tunes during which he went walkabout and serenaded various females in the audience. In retrospect it was corny; at the time it put the audience firmly in the pocket of his louder-than-loud checked jacket.

Number one son Lurrie, a blues strapping at 27, established a musical rapport of friendly rivalry with Dad: often the two would stand out front of the stage trading licks and spurring each other on. Unusually for a young blueser, Lurrie favoured slow numbers for his featured spots; Fenton Robinson's "As The Years Go Passing By" was a notable example. His voice displayed a richness and individuality which alone would mark him as a future star, but it was his guitar solos, fierce and fiery or achingly blue as required, which showed that he had absorbed all the vocabulary of the blues.

I left with a new respect for pub back rooms in High Wycombe.

Mike Atherton

## Mike Westbrook's Pier Rides

LONDON BASS CLEF

IN THE MIDDLE of a splendid month at the Clef – George Coleman shouldering aside the shackles of a hard bop upbringing, Eberhard Weber making his bass sing and Didier Lockwood conjuring high dervish dances from the violin – the Westbrook worked through their *Pier Rides* music with a determination and spirit one is tempted to call severe. This must be some of the darkest music Mike's worked on since "Marching Song", and without the dance element all the harshest tones were thrown into unforgiving relief.

Aside from the more jovial march tunes that open and close the suite, the camp touches that Westbrook exploits elsewhere have no place in this work. Kate Westbrook puts her strangled high voice to chilling use and her sombre lower one to magnify the apprehension in the writing. Brian Godding's guitar is a splinter of controlled violence; Peter Whyman contributes a twisted virtuoso spiral on alto and soprano. The formality of the settings serves to concentrate the attention: nothing's wasted by this spare line-up.

There were lyrical moments in the performance, which actually went on a little too long; mostly, it was hard music of complicated emotions, as in the moments when – over a crashing vamp set up on a drum machine – the

players brutalised the themes. Purgatorial, but not disagreeable, this was the Westbrook operation at its most direct and challenging.

Richard Cook

## Didier Lockwood Band

LONDON BASS CLEF

THE DIDIER LOCKWOOD Band have been together now for some 18 months, with Gordon Beck on piano, Dave Green on bass, and the remarkable Tony Rabison on drums. Over the past year, Lockwood has played all over Europe, including a whistle-stop tour of Poland and a week at the Paris Olympia (from which has just issued forth a live LP). This night's performance may have been the last time to catch this excellent band, at least in London, due to the constant propensity for change and evolution exhibited by Lockwood himself. That said, his present band are equal to his awesome talent, providing a relentless driving rhythm and harmonic counterpoint to Didier's violin pyrotechnics.

Lockwood has created a fusion of seeming disparate elements, bebop and a classicism touched by Middle Eastern mores. Beck's "Race Against Time" begins with a majestic swell of piano and drums, thrown into relief with a stark and sombre melody from Lockwood signalling a furious break

by Rabison pounding his cymbals with steamhammer precision. Lockwood downs a couple of octaves with the help of a handy little device located in the region of his right foot, and as drawing jewels from some deep reservoir of Islamic textures. His stocky frame thrashing wildly, the intensity of his playing is phenomenal.

The fingerboard and bow seem almost clumsy in his hands, unable fully to capture the intricacies of sound available to Lockwood's imagination. His use of effects pedals increases his dynamic range and he is able to recapture sounds that would be lost through the limitations of the human ear, and to invent new ones limited only by the instrument's material qualities and by obedience to some concept of time. The effect of this

glorious onslaught is like being dragged along by a speeding train down narrow avenues in search of the Minotaur that lurks at the heart of Lockwood's personal maze.

The second set was built around an elegantly structured suite by Gordon Beck. In parts tender and elegiac, it allowed Lockwood to foreground an unforgettable solo which for me was the highlight of the evening. Laying textural phrases one over the other, triggering associations as diverse as Schubert and Philip Glass (although without the reliance on repetition for effect).

An innovative and dynamic performer, whatever Lockwood decides to do over the next few months should prove to be very interesting.

Russell Lack



Didier Lockwood: smile please



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AS SONNY COMES TO VISIT AGAIN, A FRESH  
LOOK AT A KEY PERIOD FROM HIS EARLY  
WORK: 1957-58. BY JACK COOKE

## Sonny Rollins

RENEWING THE SPARK

*Village Vanguard* and by Boplicity of *Sonny Rollins And The Contemporary Leaders*, dating from November 1957 and October 1958 respectively, offer the opportunity to attempt a reevaluation of what happened with Rollins between these two dates. Both albums have an

THE  
RECENT  
reissues,  
by Blue  
Note of  
*A Night  
At The*

importance beyond their undoubted intrinsic value, for they represent the first and final major statements of Rollins' first period as an independent artist, prior to a three-year retirement, certainly from recording and to a large extent from public performance, which he ended late in 1961 when he returned to the Jazz Gallery and a new Victor contract.

The Vanguard set seems now to signal very clearly Rollins' determination to dominate his musical environment, and it might be expected that the Contemporary album carries similar semiotic significance, inspiring thoughts of "where could he go from here?" except a) up, b) down, or c) away to think it over; but all these are hindsight options. The Contemporary album disguises extremely well

the period of experiment of which it forms the casual culmination, and indeed the clarity with which the Vanguard performances may now be seen has only gradually arrived.

It certainly would be easy to say that at the time it all seemed like a diffuse and unstructured year or so for Rollins, which quickly revealed itself as a wide-ranging, diverse and notably adventurous period. Lies, folks, all lies. Such an assumption would not take account of the patterns of record releasing and therefore information available at the time. For a start, you never saw a Blue Note unless you had connections (the label had neither a leasing arrangement nor an import distributor in the UK until around 1961) and while Riverside and Atlantic were issued via Decca's London label and Contemporary via their Vogue subsidiary, the flow from these sources tended to be late, infrequent and subject to the editorial judgement of the period.

So little of what was really happening registered at all; in fact it wasn't until around the end of 1960 that anybody realised Rollins wasn't around, by which time his pre-retirement output was still creeping into the (mainly specialist) shops. So if 1958 didn't seem like a particularly special or relevant, even if 'diffuse and unstructured' period for the tenor-player, it was because we were all living through a pretty unstructured period and trying hard to make even modest sense of it. Nevertheless the events of this particular 'historical moment' have been available for reconstruction for at least a decade or more now. Granted, some things have disappeared again but over the years it has all been there, and it is a task worth doing.

**THE POINT OF DEPARTURE:** in mid-1957 Rollins left Max Roach's band to "go out on his own" as they used to say at the time, a phrase which captures far better the journeyman slog of the bebop musician of the period than any "solo artist" pretentiousness. Rollins, and his contemporaries, simply hit the road, fixed up gigs and one- or two-off recording deals, played with house rhythm sections or scratch outfits and hoped for the best: "(W)hen we went out it was really rough-rough-rough all the way around" (interview with Richard Cook, *Wire* August 1985). The problem then becomes how to survive in this milieu and, surviving, how to renew the imagination, the spark of genius even, in the company of often far less able people who may anyway only be around for a gig or two.

Inevitably the 'set piece' recordings from this period give little indication of how this

may have been achieved. The stylistic extensions and role-reversals of "Freedom Suite" I have speculated about for years in one respect only: does the title relate to any kind of 'social significance' or does it have a more intimate and ironic insinuation? Max could be something of a martinet as a leader... but then again so could Rollins... The *Big Brass* set seems to have even less relevance to day-to-day survival. It is an aberration, the coincidence of an up-and-coming 'name' hitched to a newly-invented jazz label looking to make its mark, rather than any real confluence of ideas. Ernie Wilkins' writing seems as intent upon caging Rollins as showcasing him. Yet, "Grand Street" is a lot of fun in a catch-as-catch-can way (and may even represent an ironic comment on the earlier "Striver's Row").

Very much more importantly the B-sides of these albums offer the real clues and represent very much better where Rollins was at in their dazzling off-the-cuff versions of material like "What's My Name?", "If You Were The Only Girl In The World", "Someday I'll Find You", "Will You Still Be Mine", along with the slightly more predictable "Manhattan" and "Till There Was You", and a dizzying solo version of "Body And Soul".

A quarter of a century and more later, it's not easy to find a generic term for this material — 'show-songs' is inadequate, 'standards' irrelevant in view of the fact that only Rollins plays them, 'popular songs' untrue because in most cases their popularity had been and gone years ago. Nor does Rollins make things easier by exploiting the boundaries of such an area with such determination. But if it's difficult to encapsulate in a generic term it's straightforward to describe, in terms of available (low) technology and the need for space and self-renewal.

Lester Koenig's 1959 sleeve-note to the *Contemporary Leaders* album remarks on "the inexhaustible sheaf of music he carries in his saxophone case": what Rollins was working from is printed sheet music, copies of songs published here, there and everywhere over the years, new or remaindered. His recorded work from 1958 is an absolute cornucopia of such material — "Chapel In The Moonlight", "Alone Together", "I'll Follow My Secret Heart", "Shadow Waltz"... It isn't a question of who else could have unearthed such items, for Rollins had been digging steadily deeper into this archive for years, and had a knowledge of the form arguably unparalleled by any other musician of note. The use he puts it to seems to be a basis for invention and renewal, at a personal level within an understood framework

of suggestion and demonstration, a *lingua franca* used to sustain an uncertain and unquestionably nomadic existence.

Within this framework Rollins moved away from the tenor-bass-drums format, developed prior to but fully invoked at the Village Vanguard set and favoured for the *Freedom Suite* album and much of *Big Brass*, organising himself back into the more conventional piano-based rhythm section.

Because, let's face it, tenor-bass-drums was a hard-work format for all concerned. And not everybody was seen as up to it. Al Lion once told me how he'd spent hours driving around New York looking for Elvin Jones (he'd located Wilbur Ware) after Rollins had decided, well into the Village Vanguard evening, that he didn't want to work with Donald Bailey and Pete La Roca. Given a piano, how you space things out becomes different, the question of distributing weight becomes decidedly easier, and if you're mining the world of sheet music for all it's worth sooner or later you need a reminder of where the chords lie. Maybe not if you're Sonny Rollins, but maybe for the benefit of the guys you're trying to get through the gig with.

THIS NEW SENSE OF PACE, this redistribution of energy, is one of the factors that marks out the set on which Rollins guested with the Modern Jazz Quartet at the summer festival held at Music Inn, Lenox, Massachusetts, in July that year. There remains, on "Limehouse Blues" and "I'll Follow My Secret Heart", the last of the tenor-bass-drums outings, but these are far removed from the complex three-part improvisations of the Village Vanguard or later in the Riverside studio; Heath and Kay refuse such roles in favour of a neat-discreet approach that probably would have got them fixed six months earlier, and there is enough evidence, particularly on "Limehouse Blues", to suggest that they and Rollins are all consciously aware of what they are — and are not — about. These are really quartet performances without a piano, filled out when Lewis, then Jackson, add their sharp-witted presences to the proceedings, taking their share of space and bending the MJQ's somewhat solemn image into a light-hearted jam on "Bag's Groove" and "Night In Tunisia".

I have thought for a long time that this is the set which marks the entry on to the world stage of the Sonny Rollins we have become accustomed to over the last 20-odd years, the self-confident virtuoso who does as much — or

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## Recollections Of The Future



OFF TO Huddersfield this month for that city's Contemporary Music Festival, which in only a few years has established itself as one of this country's main events of its kind. No room here to list all 28 concerts scheduled for 17-26 November, or even the 46 premières. The highly cosmopolitan character this festival has gradually taken on is indicated by, for example, the inclusion of a great deal of music from Eastern Europe. The Russian composer Sofia GUBAIOULINA will be present, there is a LUTOSLAWSKI retrospective series, KURTÁG's 60th birthday will be celebrated. The remarkable Ensemble Modern of West Germany will make its first visit to this country, playing 13 works in four days. German composers such as YORK HÖLLER and HELMUT LACHENMANN will be represented, and the four most prominently featured British composers will be DAVIO BLAKE, JOHN CASKEN, NIGEL OSBORNE and PATRIC STANOFORO. A sampling, then . . .

The first important Huddersfield concert is in St Paul's Hall on 18 November, when the Polytechnic Symphony Orchestra gives out with STRAVINSKY's *Ragtime* and the UK premières of STANOFORO's *Dialogues* for cymbalom and chamber orchestra and of HEINZ HOLLIGER's *Atembogen*, which employs some of the more bizarre sonorities of contemporary music. The following day in the same venue Margaret Field sings PROKOJEV's Five Poems by Anna Akhmatova and the British premières of song cycles by SOFIA GUBAIOULINA and KURTÁG, the latter, incidentally, titled *Farewell, My Darling*. Still in St Paul's Hall, Julian Jacobson and Andrew Ball offer STRAVINSKY's Concerto for Two Pianos, ZIMMERMANN's *Perspektiven*, the UK première of HOLLIGER's *Diaphonie* and the world première of a piece, so far unnamed, of CASKEN's.

Naturally the London Sinfonietta show up, and on 21 November they present a programme of old favourites: BIRTWISTLE's *Carmen Arcadus Macbannae Perpetuum*, HENZE's *Miracle Of The Rose*, OSBORNE's *Zakus*, LUTOSLAWSKI's *Choir I*, OLIVER KNUSSEN's *Cowring*. The following day the Berne Quartet arrive, to give a morning recital including STRAVINSKY's Three Pieces, CRUMB's *Black Angels* for electrified string quartet and the British première of KLAUS HUBER's Quartet No. 2. In the evening of 22 November the Ensemble Modern put in their first appearance, playing SCHOENBERG's Chamber Symphony No. 1, LACHENMANN's *Movement* and the UK premières of HOLLIGER's *Taru-nuik* and HOLLIGER's *Improvisation On The Name Of Pierre Boulez*.

On the morn of 23 November the Brodsky Quartet play LUTOSLAWSKI's String Quartet, the British premières of ELENA FIRSOVA's *Mysterium* and SOFIA GUBAIOULINA's *In Croce* and the world première of a new quartet by the latter, commissioned by the BBC. Later that day the Ensemble Modern gives the UK premières of her *Det II* and of GOLDMANN's Ensemble Concerto, KOPELINT's *A Few Minutes With An Obsess* and DENISOV's *Three Kle Pictures* (never to be

confused with GUNTHER SCHULLER's *Seven Kle Pictures*). Perhaps the chief event of 24 November is a concert titled "Masque And Metamorphosis" by the Northern Sinfonia. After LUTOSLAWSKI's Funeral Music In Memory Of Bartók, CASKEN's *Masque* and BLAKE's *Cassino*, this will end with the British première of ALFRED SCHNITTKE's Concerto Grosso.

On 25 November the Ensemble Modern gives us just a glimpse of HOLLIGER's *Drei Übungen zu Scardanelli*, a piece he has been working on over the past decade which was inspired by the self-imposed confinement of the German poet Friedrich Hölderlin. It will be remembered that the world première of this work at last year's Donaueschingen Festival occupied two entire concerts, and for Huddersfield some purely instrumental sections have been chosen. Along with them will be heard the British premières of ISANG YUN's cantata *Tale Dab Nacht* and HUBER's *Remember G*, a spectacular piece for double bass and ensemble. We finally break out of St Paul's Hall for the festival's last concert, which is in Huddersfield Town Hall and finds LUTOSLAWSKI conducting the BBC Symphony Orchestra in his Concerto for Orchestra, Double Concerto and Symphony No. 5. However, do not fail to break into Huddersfield Art Gallery, where "several times daily", according to the festival brochure, they will screen a 52-minute film depicting the life and achievements of the amazing Cornelius Cardew.

ANOTHER PIECE BY YORK HÖLLER will be heard from the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Lochar Zagroek in the Festival Hall on 7 November. This is his *Drumplay*, an ambitious work for soprano, orchestra and tape, using a Strindberg text. Höller translates the writer's concept of a "poetic dream" into musical terms, employing both taped sounds and live electronics to suggest the consciousness of the dreamer - in Strindberg's words, "a mixture of memories, free inventions, absurdities and improvisations". And talking of tape and live electronics, we must not forget that the mighty Electro-Acoustic Music Association of Great Britain is back in action.

Meanwhile the Parke Ensemble's "Autumn 1986: Three British Composers" series continues at the October Gallery with another soprano recital, by Mary Wiegold, on 5 November. This includes RAVEL's *Trois Poèmes De Mallarmé*, STRAVINSKY's *Trois Poèmes De La Lyrique Japonaise* and DEUX *Poèmes De Balmont* - marvellous pieces all, though not exactly typical of British composers or representative of autumn. BIRTWISTLE's *Song By Myself*, JUDITH WEIR's *Thru'd!* and PHILIP GRANGE's *Commemorative Natures* are also present, however, and our esteemed contemporary *The Listener* rather fulsomely described this last as "stunningly assured . . . powerfully atmospheric". The series then moves to St Martin-in-the-Fields where on 28 November GRANGE's *Kingdom Of Bani*, JOHN WOOLRICH's *Serbian Songs* and the London première of DAVID LANKASTH's *Variations* are heard. These are the three British composers alluded to in the title of the series; the contralto Katrina Makepeace-Lott participates in this concert.



## Blowin' in from Chicago,

WORDS JOHN LITWEILER

PHOTOGRAPHY: LAUREN DEUTSCH

AT LAST, the first record of Edward Wilkerson's compositions has been released. It's *Birth Of A Nation* (Sessoms 0001) by the Shadow Vignettes big band, which is 25 players conducted by Wilkerson. I suppose the first things everyone hears in his music are its swing and theatricality; sonic richness, sophistication of form, and high expression are some other obvious qualities. Meanwhile, the Shadow Vignettes video *The Legend Of Honky-Tonk Bad* (Wilkerson's music, John Toles-Bey's words) has been winning prizes in American competitions, as has the video *Portrait* by Hal Russell and his Energy, I mean NRG Ensemble. Their two albums to date are *Conserving NRG*

(Principally Jazz 02) and *Hal Russell NRG Ensemble* (Nessa 21).

Was it all of 20 years ago that Chicago's radical young jazz artists — Abrams, Jarman, Mitchell, and the rest — burst on the scene? Two decades in jazz used to be a long time, the difference, for instance, between Armstrong's first Hot Fives and Parker's first quintets. On the other hand, the modern Chicagoans' innovations, from compositional form to free improvising ensemble interplay, have yet to be superseded. Early New Orleans, 20s Chicago, 30s Kansas City, the distinctive qualities of regional jazz hot spots dissipate as their most significant musicians disperse. After 1969,

when the Braxton trio and the Art Ensemble began the steady exodus of modern Chicago masters, the avant garde players who remained here and the generation that followed them have in general maintained a surprisingly high quality of musicianship and devotion to uncompromised creation. Their inspirations may indeed be Mitchell, Bowie and the rest, but their influences are usually quite different, and drawn from the whole world of postwar jazz. The most impressive evidence of these features is the work of Wilkerson, Russell, and their friends.

Interestingly, the two of them have never met, though both are highly visible, have

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prolific composer, leads his trio, Shadow Vignettes big band, and Eight Bold Souls, and plays in other leaders' bands, most prominently in ones led by Douglas Ewart and Kahil El'Zabar. The differences between Wilkerson's and Russell's music are obvious at a few moments' hearing. Their similarities include broad humour, urgency conveyed by thoughtful ordering of ideas, and a special, joyous warmth of communication. These are basic internal qualities, beyond style, beyond classification. Particularly since caution and conservatism mark so much of today's jazz scene, the courage of their originality is a prized quality. If their music at times suggest a wide range of

contemporary ideas, this is not to be mistaken for eclecticism — quite the contrary, these are mature artists: styles dissolve, and the resulting music is very alive, personal acts of communication.

HAL RUSSELL IS ONE of those very rare, though not unprecedented, artists whose most important works began to appear after several decades of activity. Born in Detroit in 1926, of a musical family, he began playing a toy drum kit at the age of four. "There was never any doubt about what I was going to be — never. I thought briefly of being a lion tamer, at the age of seven or so. I was influenced by [circus star] Clyde Beatty or someone. I had some cats and dogs; I set up a fence in the back yard, a cage — I tortured them. But that idea didn't last long."

In Hal's early teenaged years his family moved to the Chicago suburbs. Soon thereafter, he became a professional musician: school dances, weddings, "I'm a self-taught drummer. I had lessons, but none that ever did any good. I took a Gene Krupa drum book and learned all of it." As a percussionist, he received a scholarship to the University of Illinois; he learned to play trumpet in order to gain his degree. In 1948, he returned home to find work.

"I went into Richard's Lounge on Hatlem Avenue and I said, do you need a group? Yeah, he said, but we don't want drums in here. What else do you play? I said, well, I can play vibes. I knew five pieces on vibes — the blues, 'I Got Rhythm', 'Crazy Rhythm', 'September Song', and one other — all in the key of C. I put together a three-piece band, vibes, piano, and bass. I used those five tunes and repeated them — luckily, the hours were short — and they thought I was great. Right away the next day I started learning other pieces, and in six months I had a hundred songs. There's no way of learning like when you have to."

In those days, Jay Burckhardt led a big band that included at various times young Chicagoans like Gene Ammons, Lee Konitz, Lou Levy, and Joe Williams. Hal joined the band, playing drums and vibes and singing ("Harry The Hipster Gibson songs — 'Who Put the Benzadrine in Mrs Murphy's Ovaltine?'); with Burckhardt, then, Hal drummed for stars like Billie Holiday and Sarah Vaughan at Regal Theater stage shows. In 1950, Hal played vibes and like Day played drums in a quintet that Miles Davis led for two months in Chicago and two months more in Indianapolis.

"God, Miles was a sweetheart. He taught me so much about playing, about melody and

what to do — I can never pay him back. And like Day was one of the best drummers in the world. These same polyrhythms and busyness that are in me were in him — I think I learned them from him." (Art Blakey and other drummers have expressed similar enthusiasm for the work of Day, who died in his early 20s.)

Throughout the 50s, then, Hal played wherever there was music to be played — in burlesque joints, musical comedy shows, night clubs, with fellow Chicagoans like Sonny Rollins, with touring soloists like Stan Getz; he jammed with Coltrane, during "Trane's travels with Johnny Hodges, and for three years he played on a weekly television show "with incredible people like Duke Ellington and Erroll Garner — my God, I played with just about everybody I ever wanted to".

How did Hal Russell play drums in the bop era?

"I played them like a horn. Most drummers used to play solos by beating on the drums as hard as they could. But if someone gave me 32 bars, I played 32 bars: there was a bridge, and it was constructed. I was sort of Max Roach-influenced but sort of more complex in terms of left-hand fills, because I wanted to be part of it with the horn player — I wanted to give him a kick in the ass at the right time, and then when he'd stop to take a breath I'd kick him even harder. I like to hear a pattern laid down with all kinds of shit — I needed that — that's why I liked Elvin Jones, because he laid down a barrage. That makes people play."

And throughout this highly active decade, Hal maintained another life as a severe heroin addict, and even dealer — "a dog-eat-dog scene; the drug world is not a friendly world. I thought I never played better music in my life — but Joe Daley had to fire me after a job because I was nodding out, man, the people were complaining."

By the time Hal gave up drugs and got married, Ornette Coleman's first two albums were creating their first shock effects on Chicago musicians. Hal and two mates in a bop band, tenor saxist Daley and bassist Russell Thorne, took the dare and began playing runs "outside the changes". "We found it easy. We thought, wouldn't it be great to do this all the time?" They became the Joe Daley Trio, Chicago's first outside jazz group. And Hal decided, "If the horn was going to be free of the changes, then the drummer should be free of keeping time. So I began to drop out, change the rhythm, use more polyrhythms, to do almost exactly what I wanted to do. That was what I felt free drumming to be, and it was borne out in other

players like Sunny Murray."

There was an attractive air of experimentalism about the Daley Trio, which played on and off throughout the 60s, even played the Newport Jazz Festival once, and shortly thereafter recorded the misleadingly conservative and misleadingly titled *Joe Daley Trio At Newport '63* (RCA Victor LSP-2763).

At last, in 1969-70, while living in Florida, Hal became a leader, moulding a group of young Miami musicians into a working band tooted in the explorations of Ornette Coleman and the Daley Trio. Returning to Chicago, Hal briefly rejoined Daley - by this time, the tenorist usually played bop - and in 1972, at his wife's urging, Hal formed his first Chicago band. Three followed years of obscurity and, in 1977, a personal breakthrough. He'd been trying to teach his music to a young saxophonist; finally, frustrated, he said, "Look, man, I can't explain it to you - I'm going to get a fucking saxophone and play it for you." He bought a C-melody sax at a pawnshop and "The minute I put it into my mouth, I knew: you jerk, you wasted all your time playing drums - if you had started on this, you'd be Bird, man." This instant love for the C-melody led Hal back to his neglected trumpet and then to the tenor sax, presently his favoured instrument.

Steadily, Hal Russell's NRG Ensemble took shape. A fiery young alto-tenorist, the Coltrane-influenced Chuck Berdick (an ex-Daley student) entered NRG in 1978. The next year Curt Bley, heir to the Chicago bass tradition that runs from Milt Hinton to Malachi Favors, joined, and in 1980 Steve Hunt and Brian Sandstrom joined. Moreover, Hunt became not merely a second vibist-percussionist, with a heart wholly in post-Ayler jazz, but Russell's alter ego; Sandstrom, Bley's duet partner in bass and electric bass adventures, also brought a second trumpet and electric guitar, complete with wild electronics effects, to the NRG sound. Significantly, both Hunt and Sandstrom also play in various, shifting personnel free improvisation combinations that may or may not call themselves jazz groups. Since spring 1985, a similarly free spirit, bassist Kent Kessler, has replaced Bley in the quintet.

WHAT KIND OF MUSIC does the NRG Ensemble play? Free jazz, boldly, aggressively, even fiercely. Their repertoire of over 200 original compositions includes a number of pieces by Bley and Hunt. Sandstrom's development as a composer of forceful, complex, often minimalist-oriented structures has been especially striking in recent years, and his works comprise about 20% of the book. Two-thirds or more of NRG's scores were composed by the

leader himself.

"People are used to theme, development, then recapitulation. I avoid recapitulation. I like to put a lot of things that are related in a string. I can only write when I'm inspired, by people, situations of living."

An especially fine example is "Linda Jazz Princess" on the Nessa album. Dedicated to disc jockey-record producer Linda Prince, it's a long, wild, hilarious impression of her jazz radio show, from dixieland to swing to bop to explosive ecstasy, with a multitude of multi-instrument switching.

In 1986, Hal cites three recent developments as being of special importance in his own music. First are his long compositions: *The Van Trapp Family Swingers*, impressions of the film *The Sound of Music* into which not the faintest wisp of Richard Rodgers intrudes; *Fred!* (1986), his tribute to Fred Astaire, complete with tap dancers playing the Astaire-Ginger Rogers roles; and *Time Is All You've Got*, based, of course, on Artie Shaw's music. An especially remarkable quality of these works is that, for all their exuberance and humour, there are no elements of satire - Hal Russell is *all music*. Second are the NRG Ensemble's explorations of free improvisation: "We do that mostly at (monthly) concerts at my house", because "when you're playing totally free, sometimes it's not going to work" - a chance Hal presently is not ready to take before certain audiences. Third, his tenor sax development has begun to dominate his conception, which in turn has re-inspired his corner work. "I'm concentrating more on the horns than on drums and vibes, which may or may not be good, but that's what I want to do - for one thing, to get out of carrying all this damn equipment."

In autumn, 1986, Hal will unveil for the world to hear his new trio, featuring guitarist-percussionist Colonel David Lee. While he says the trio's music is inspired by Albert Ayler's mid-60s groups, it's safe to predict that it'll sound no more like Ayler than like Artie Shaw or Richard Rodgers: the joy and the musical qualities of Hal Russell's music are unique. There's an album of Hal's free improvisations with multi-instrumentalist Mars Williams, *Eftsoos* (Nessa 24), and the Nessa label has an NRG Ensemble date with saxman Charles Tyler in the can; later this summer the Ensemble is recording Hal's three long works for Principally Jazz. Hal Russell himself is 60 this year, and his NRG players' ages range from 28 to 32. Most of all, their music offers rare freshness and exciting spontaneity, reminiscent of the first Coleman and Ayler bands. Sad to say, there's nothing else in modern jazz like it; unfortunately, it's an act of courage to create such free, original, and

joyous music in this dark, fearful era.

"That's what my music is all about, all these experiences - this chaotic, frenetic music I call the NRG Ensemble."

Apart from various Chicago productions, the huge Shadow Vignettes troupe has also travelled, and Edward is planning further travel for the whole crew again this year.

"We're going to do another dramatic recitation, and I'll have another vocal piece with Rita Warford, and we'll have these pieces for dancers - there are a lot of big proscenium stages, so we're going to take full advantage of them."

Unfortunately, the demands of leading such a large cast of performers prevent Edward's playing with the ensemble.

"You have to be a director, a diplomat, a translator, a comedian. You have to be consoling to somebody - you have to have all these qualities, and it's challenging. Especially now, because it's difficult to get people out and performing. You depend on people because of friendship."

In January, 1985, Edward Wilkerson arrived at a personal creative peak in a series of weekly concerts that opened the new Chicago Film-makers theatre. His new group was the Eight Bold Souls; the final concert was on the coldest night in Chicago history, and ticket-sellers attempted in vain to send the oversized throngs of music lovers back into the 28° below zero outdoors. All the composing mastery evident in his big band scores is turned to subter, more intimate services with the Souls; Wilkerson's octet compositions develop, contrast themes, and in general really do fulfil his description of the Shadow Vignettes principle.

For all the very personal conception of his Eight Bold Souls music, it's the balance of players that's made the band successful. Trumpeter Robert Griffin is an ironic, lyrical heir to the abstractions of Leo Smith and Lester Bowie; by contrast, trombonist Isaiah Jackson inflames melodic ideas with irrevocable expressivity. Mwata Bowden plays tenor and baritone saxes, creating solo unity via elaborate thematic improvisation; incidentally, this intense improviser is also one of the best free jazz clarinetists. Naomi Millender, cello; Aaron Dodd, ruba, young bass virtuoso Richard Brown; and a drummer are the rest of Wilkerson's cohorts. In four of the Souls' concerts, the great sensitivity and vast responsive resources of Steve McCall proved the best possible drum accompaniment for the group. Bold Souls, true enough - and boldest of all is Edward's tenor sax work, expansive, emotional, rich with blues phrasing, flavoured with belly-shaking humour.

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# Zwerin

... BRINGS GOOD NEWS

WE HAVE HEARD the old complaint from record companies, distributors, club owners, agents and the musicians themselves since the beginning of recorded time: "Jazz doesn't sell." Or: "Jazz is dead." You don't hear that so much around here any more. There's an inch of good news in Paris.

Good news of course is relative. A night's sleep is good news to a condemned man. An offer of manual labour is good news for an unemployed manual worker. The following good news would be less good in the world of rock. As an expatriate American drummer put it: "There's only an inch of difference between here and America, but it's the inch I live in."

MRS EGAL FAHRI, who directs THE NEW MORNING, the largest jazz club in Paris, says: "Our audience is getting both larger and younger. In the beginning, five years ago, we used to have about 20% students. Now it's 50%. And there are more clubs opening than closing." ANDRÉ DAMON, whose club LE PETIT JOURNAL/MONTPARNAISE opened about a year ago, agrees: "We're doing better business than I projected. I'd say there's an explosion of jazz in Paris."

*Round Midnight*, BERTRAND TAVERNIER's film about an American jazzman in Paris, starring DEXTER GORDON, opens in Paris this autumn. RON CARTER, who is in it, told TAVERNIER: "It took a Frenchman to make the first film about our culture." And WOODY ALLEN told him that Dexter's Dale Turner is the best performance by a non-professional actor he has ever seen. Producer IRWIN (*They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*, *The Right Stuff*, *Rocky I, II, III, IV*) WINKLER, says: "Experts warned me that a jazz movie won't sell. But before we did *Rocky*, experts said that boxing movies don't sell. How commercial *Round Midnight* will be I frankly don't know. But this is a unique subject, and the only thing that matters is if it touches people in some way. In this business you learn to trust your instincts."

In January, at what he called "my first jazz press conference", the then Minister of Culture JACK LANG announced the formation of the government-subsidised "Orchestre National de Jazz". The orchestra had only a one-year budget, but though the Minister has since changed along with the government and the culture budget has been slashed, it was recently announced that the subsidy would be renewed in 1987.

KENTON KEITH, US Cultural Attaché here since last year, is working to establish a "jazz musician in residence" in Paris. Discussions and correspondence, both internal and with the French Ministry of Culture, have dealt with such specifics as remuneration, job profile and how the responsibilities will be shared between the two governments. JACK LANG gave his okay. This summer Keith said it looks like the US portion of the budget can be found, and once again though the government has changed, the French Ministry of Culture is continuing to support the project.

JAZZ HOT, THE WORLD'S first jazz magazine, just celebrated its 50th birthday. Finances have been shaky, and it has been sold several times over the past few years. It has suffered from lack of organization and funds and sudden and illogical

changes of policy and layout. However last spring, *Jazz Hot* was taken over by GUY ROLLAND's Editions de l'Instant, which immediately published a magnificently produced "hors serie" album titled *Un Demi Siècle De Jazz* containing 160 previously unpublished photographs. Although Rolland does not claim to be an expert, his publisher's instinct tells him that jazz is not dead and that it can sell if, like any other product, it is sold properly. He hired the experienced and respected journalist PHILIPPE ADLER (*L'Express*, *Europe 1*) as Editor-in-Chief. The magazine has since been coming out on time, it has been totally redesigned with a larger format, pay scales have been raised to attract first-class people and circulation is on the way up.

The quality of French jazz has been getting better; there are a lot of world-class players for a relatively small country. Pianist MICHEL PETRUCCIANI, guitarist BIRTILLI LAGRENE and saxophonist XAVIER COBO are some of the younger ones. And the veteran organist EDDY LOUIS has formed a big band which combines modal and funky jazz with salsa, calypso, Antilles and African music in exciting and unique ways. The band is working.

Potentially the most important trend is in the provinces, where an informal network of new-age promoters is being born. These are people in their 20s and 30s who produce jazz concerts and records because they love the music and their native culture and feel the call to marry the two. They too understand that jazz can sell if properly sold.

RICHARD BRÉCHET in Uzès, near Avignon, is a good example. Bréchet, a painter, is one of those French intellectuals who considers jazz as representing the best of America. He has presented something like 300 concerts in his restaurant, creating a sort of sanctuary. Musicians have been settling in the town - GLENN FERRIS and MAI WALDRON for example. The combination of respect, home-cooking and a place to rest and rehabilitate in one of Bréchet's guest rooms has attracted ARCHIE SHEPP, CHICO FREEMAN and other musicians on the road. The unwritten, even unspoken deal, an organic barter, is price concession in exchange for physical and psychic comfort. BERTRAND DUPONT in Brittany is another example.

In perspective, however, jazz is still a meter you choose for love, there is no other reason to get involved with so much insecurity and discomfort. In France or anywhere else. But there is room for honest improvisation in this country. Given the reverse situation back home in the US of A - where only "the bottom line" counts - that inch of difference we live in here is something to cheer.





What was this thing called BEAT? Like jazz, which it

took for a soundtrack, it was a feel,



a way

of being. A sort of bohemianism; a kind of art, a mix of

sloppy-kid don't-give-a-shit manners and a great passion



for beauty. A lot of it was as shallow and self-

regarding as a haircut; some of it led to magnificent

picaresque adventures in American art. Like



Pre-Raphaelites and punks, beats were people who came

and went in a single breath of history. Here is not a

comprehensive guide but a few fragments, a scatter of

icons, from the beat era —



born

with CHARLIE PARKER, dying with JOHN F. KENNEDY.

WHEN LENNY BRUCE first began to attract notice in the late 50s as a nightclub comic, *Variety* roasted him for "only trying to make the band laugh". The square who wrote this corrosive review stumbled upon an essential difference between Lenny and the Bob Hope generation of one-liner comics that preceded him. Lenny was the culmination of a new breed of post-World War Two satirists who shunned mother-in-law and army jokes to violate the traditional showbiz taboos of sex, politics and religion. And they were mostly jazz-oriented.

Mort Sahl, who gave the New Comedy its initial thrust in the early years of the Eisenhower-McCarthy Terror, told jokes with the Stan Kenton Band and buddied with Paul

ated on stage: "The kind of sickness I wish *Time* had written about, is that school teachers in Oklahoma get a top annual salary of \$4000, while Sammy Davis, Jr. gets \$10,000 a week in Vegas." This inspired Lenny to create an early "routine", The Tribunal, which sentenced Sammy Davis to spend ten years in a racist Southern town without his "Jewish star and stocking-cap".

LENNY'S CAREER WENT through three major phases, the first being the "bits" that polarised the world of show business and caused massive audience walkouts. Religions Inc. had the religious leaders sitting around a table on Madison Avenue talking business like sleazy Broadway agents, hustlers and used-car salesmen, climaxed by evangelist Oral Roberts talking on the phone with the Pope:

"Johnny, they buggin' us ovah hesh with this dumb-ass integration. No, I don't know why the hell they wanna go to school, either. No, I already gave them walkin'-across-the-

water and turnin'-the-snake-into-the-cane! They don't want that jazz anymore! Johnny, they don't want no more quotations from outen the Bible, they want us to come out and say things! Like, 'let them go to school with them!' Sure, they're commies! And Philly Joe says hello."

But his most upsetting "bit" was How to Relax Your Coloured Friends at Parties, with black guitarist Eric Miller. Lenny begins by proposing roasts to Joe Louis and Paul Robeson, "who was O.K. until he got into that commie horseshit", and getting progressively smashed, concludes with: "Say, you're a good boy, lemme ask you somethin'. Always been curious. They tell me you guys really got a big wang-on, like a baby's arm with an apple in its fist. Could I see it? Come on, let's whip out that toll of tarpaper and let's see what you got here, Chonga!"

Nat Hentoff wrote, "The lines are close enough to parody to allow the audience to laugh, but many find themselves squinting, because Bruce's point is how very little casual social relationship exists between Negroes and even the most enlightened white liberals."

Jewish comedy, since the Golden Age of radio in the 30s, had dominated American humour, but unlike Jack Benny (Kubelsky), George Burns (Bitnbaum) and Eddie Cantor (Izko-witz), Lenny did not disguise his Jewishness, but flaunted it with brazen pride, equating Jewishness with being hip and urban, and *goyshe* with being semi-literate and square. At his opening night in San Francisco's Jazz Workshop in 1962 – it was the only time the celebrated jazz club booked a comic – Lenny was on a double bill with Ben Webster. Ben, who had never heard Lenny before, stood at the back with me to dig his first show.

"Eddie Cantor is *goyshe*, George Jessel and George Burns are *goyshe*, Coleman Hawkins is Jewish."

Ben turned to me with utter amazement. "That son-of-a-bitch is *crazy*!" Then Lenny zinged Ben with: "Ben Webster is *very Jewish*! I've got an uncle who looks exactly like Ben Webster!" And Ben fell out.

On his second night at the Jazz Workshop, Lenny was busted by the San Francisco police for violating the California obscenity code: referring to the exposure of male genitalia, for relating the bedroom conversations of varied couples vainly striving for orgasmic release, and most of all, for using the vernacular for *fellatio*, which was also used by Meryl Streep in *Sophia's Choice* that earned her the Academy Award as Best Actress of 1982.

Following his acquittal by a jury, Lenny entered Phase Two, abandoning the "bits" and "routines" he had long tired of, and going into free-form improvisation. I got a look at Lenny's genius for winging it one night in Lawrence Ferlinghetti's City Lights

L E N N Y B R U C E

## The raw mouth

WORDS: GROVER SALES

PHOTOGRAPHY: UNKNOWN

Desmond. Lord Buckley, who looked out of central casting as a member of the House of Lords, translated the Bible and Shakespeare into the argot of a black hipster. Lenny Bruce hung out with jazzmen who shared his taste for the bizarre and irreverent – also sexist Joe Massi and Hampton Hawes. "The band" in a nightclub or burlesque house always made a point of not laughing at the comic, but Lenny broke the band up. He was discovered and eulogised, not by theatre critics, but by jazz writers Ralph J. Gleason, Gene Lees, Nat Hentoff and Ira Gitler.

When Lenny died 20 years ago, Walter Kerr, the dean of Manhattan drama critics, admitted he never saw Lenny work, but this did not deter him from writing an attack on the entire Bruce output. *Time*, which never got anything right, labelled him a "sackcomic", and Lenny retali-

Books when Lenny asked me to pick out some "far-out stuff". I found a copy of *True* magazine with an "expose" of Robert Stroud, the famed Birdman of Alcatraz. With hardly a glance at the article, Lenny walked a block to the club, and began his show reading the piece out loud:

"*True* magazine here has this vicious exposé of the Birdman of Alcatraz. The book's a joke, the movie's a hoax. Here's why. Are you ready for this? Dig. Reason number one: 'The Birdman of Alcatraz is a self-admitted homosexual.' Now isn't that a kick in the ass? He's been in the joint 57 years. Look at all the cunt he coulda had, and he turns out to be a faggot. I don't know about you Jim, but if you put me on a desert island three months without chucks, I'll do it to mud!"

LENNY'S MATERIAL COULD goad audiences to violence. At a London club, Siobhan McKenna, a fanatical Catholic, was so incensed by Lenny's references to the Pope that she raked Peter Cook's face with her fingernails, crying, "These are British hands — and they're clean!" Peter Cook, a fanatical Lenny fan, replied, "This is a British face, and it's bleeding."

Lenny was barred from entering England in 1963, and before his death in 1966 was busted for obscenity and narcotics in Hollywood, Chicago, New York and San Francisco, where he was declared a legally bankrupt pauper in 1964. Lenny now entered Phase Three, marked by his on-stage obsession with the law. Critics who once accused him of only trying to

make the band laugh, now said he was only trying to make the *Bar* laugh. He would appear on stage with a pile of law books, and read aloud:

"Now here's a law — in Darien, Connecticut, if you knock on a strange chick's door, never saw her before, she opens the door, you bust her in the mouth hard as you can, they'll put you away for two years. Now in the same town, you knock on some strange chick's door, you're wearing nothing but a raincoat, you

*Playboy*, Paul Krassner, founder of the first "alternate" counter-culture journal *The Realist*, radio-TV producers — the elite of image makers of the 60s, 70s and beyond. Paul Krassner summed up Lenny's achievement: "He fought for the right to say on a nightclub stage what he was free to say in his own living room."

Lenny's work survives on records, and there is much material that has never been released, but should be. The yuppie generation that thinks



AMERICA'S  
UNEXPIRGATED  
JAZZ POET  
AS HE  
REALLY WAS.

flash open the raincoat and yell, "Yoo-hoo, lady!" they'll put you away for ten years. Now, what hurts worse, 'Yoo-hoo, lady', or a bust in the mouth? You jack-off in front of a nun, and they'll put you away for life!"

When Lenny died, *Time* called him a "cult comic". They neglected to add that the "cult" included filmmakers like Paul Mazursky, the editors of

Chevy Chase, John Belushi and Dan Aykroyd are a scream, should find out what a comic genius sounds like. The work of Lenny Bruce is long overdue for a major revival.

(Grover Sales, author of *Jazz: America's Classical Music*, handled personal publicity for Lenny Bruce in the San Francisco area.)

## The unsquare dance

WORDS: RICHARD COOK

PHOTO: ERIC JELLY



DAVE BRUBECK LOOKED the part. The face that stared out from a *Time* magazine cover 30-odd years ago had the sober, shaven outline of a college professor and the small twinkling eyes

of a frat member with a secret perversion — like drinking in the library. Brubeck's music, mild, exotic in a correspondence course sort of way, slipped into a Beat vernacular almost accidentally.

It wasn't as though the pianist was adapting his music to an attitude of campus bohemianism. Brubeck's Quartet was massively popular on the US college circuit of the 50s — witness all those recordings of the *Jazz Goes to College* ilk — but the music was a development of directions Brubeck had already pursued for the previous ten years. There would have been Brubeck outside any Beat era.

For one thing, he was half a generation older than many of the cool players who were his peers on the West Coast in the 40s and 50s. Dave Brubeck was born in 1920, the same year as Charlie Parker, and by 1946 — the year of Bird's Savoy sessions — he had put together an Octet of fellow student-players, many of whom had studied with him under Darius Milhaud. The music on *The Dave Brubeck Octet* (recently reissued by Fantasy as OJC-101) is a mix of standards and original miniatures based on fugue figures and incessant counterpoint. The ensembles are too brittle to hint specifically at the imminence of cool, but it must be said that the group certainly glances towards what Mulligan, Davis and Tristano were about to make solid.

It was Brubeck's only instance of being

ahead of his time. The Quartet grew out of the larger group, and the trend they set was virtually extra-musical: a flavour of heavenly indolence, a study in relaxation, even when the band had to play in times that would tax the average cocktail outfit to its limit. Nobody in the band was stylistically influential by himself: Brubeck's locked-hands solos, his dry, sifted manner on ballads, his clattery contrast at faster tempos — George Shearing, Erroll Garner and Jaki Byard did the same, but not because of Brubeck.

The altoist was Paul Desmond, whose brushed, effeminate tone and willowy phrasing were quite unlike the still smooth but snappier West Coast reeds: he played pretty in a lonely, chilled sort of way, and it was actually too difficult to easily emulate. The rhythm section, usually Norman Bates or Gene Wright and Joe Morello, had a proscribed role, like Heath and Clarke in the MJQ: they scuffle respectfully at the heels of the other two, although they could certainly swing.

DESMOND DESCRIBED BRUBECK's aims as "the vigour and force of simple jazz, the harmonic complexities of Barok and Milhaud, the form (and much of the dignity) of Bach . . . the lyric romanticism of Rachmaninoff". A bit much for a polite little group playing "Laura" and "These Foolish Things". But you can see what Desmond meant. Brubeck's method is that of a man who loves the minutiae of the masters: he reproduces effects that might, in other hands, satirise the 'composely' touch in jazz, but without any special irony. His devices are less obvious than those of Shearing, although his way of stamping out a standard theme as a show of parody (as in their 1967 set of Cole Porter tunes) can grate after a while.

Paul Desmond might often sound like Lee Konitz after eating too many marshmallows, but he is at least personal; Brubeck's fingerprint is something of a smudge.

Why did this group become so popular? Such easily palatable music will always find a large and willing audience. A cruel analysis might go something like this: Brubeck continued the white emasculation of jazz which the demise of the big bands had temporarily abated; he bled all the passion out of bebop and prettified its agility; he doctored together fashionable bits of European art music, like 'experimental' time signatures and clever harmonies, and packaged it in a romantic, cool, pop-jazz way that was undoubtedly light and airy and pleasant on the ear. It had a sophisticated veneer too, so inexperienced listeners could imagine they were plugged into the

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"BEATNIK,  
ONE OF THE  
BEAT  
GENERATION  
(ORIG. IN U.S.),  
BOHEMIAN  
POETS, ETC.,  
WHO, IN THE  
1950s,  
DISSOCIATED  
THEMSELVES  
FROM THE AIMS  
OF  
CONTEMPORARY  
SOCIETY."  
—Chambers  
20th Century  
Dictionary

## The Waste Land

BY JANE HENERY AND CHARLES GARVIE

THE GREAT SHAM OF ANGLO BEAT: WHY  
OUR DROP-OUTS COULD ONLY DROOP  
AROUND.

THE WORD BEATNIK is primarily a visual image — sandals, beards and dank cellars. Occasionally it is also an aural one — the recitation of esoteric verse and the meaningless phrases of Beldice Buddhism — but it receives this imagery from *New Of The World* legend. Underneath its hairy extremities there beats a heart of Stockbroker Tudor.

Allen Ginsberg may have stripped off in public to show (!) what he was proving



("Nakedness" as it turned out), but going barefoot was the furthest a British Beatnik dared to go.

It was simply that dissociating themselves from the aims of contemporary society meant an entirely different thing for Americans and Britons. 'Contemporary Society' in America meant fridge drink-dispensers when Britain didn't have fridges, aerosol dairy cream when Britain thought a propellant was part of the war debris on the waste-land "our the back". Americans discussed the merits of Duplexes, barbecues and pool filters while Britons went on the waiting list for indoor toilets. America had had a modern consumer society since 1943, Britain was just about getting round to patterned tea-towels in 1958.

The American Beatnik, then, rebelled against everything the Consumer Society stood for, while the British Beatnik was by definition rebelling against equal education opportunities, new housing and the Welfare State. After all, this was the New Jerusalem and the British Beatniks, thank you very much, would rather the Council Estate need not be quite so close to their homes.

The British Beatnik hailed, primarily, from Universities where he did not so much drop out as droop around. In spite of the outrageous uniform his true-blue heart was showing. In 1958 a poll of Oxford students' voting habits revealed that 11% voted Liberal, 18% voted Labour and 45% Conservative. In a 'red-brick' polytechnic a few years later (1963), the same basic pattern of Conservatism emerges — "A survey among the students of Brighton showed 63% were against free love, 54% wanted sex offenders flogged and 73% described themselves as Christians." During that five year span the Beat Generation was at its height, yet fundamentally, throughout everything, in the corner of every Beatnik's heart there was an image of that suburban haven complete with fishing gnomes.

THE AMERICAN BEATNIKS provided a supreme opportunity for the off-spring of Britain's lower middle classes to differentiate themselves. They could slum while Teddy Boys looked smart, they could listen to 'Progressive' discordant music while the two R's bopped to a strictly regulated tempo, they could warble interminably shapeless 'verse' while the Duck's Arses swayed with a universal football chant.

Most of all they could be labelled "elite, intellectual mystics" while the great unsung remainder of Post-War youth could only aspire to be "mindless hooligans".

If the British Beatniks gave the impression of being somewhat uncommitted and slightly lost — "these non-American groups seem a little unsure of just what is expected of them" — it is merely because the duffle-coat was a smokescreen for middle-class reactionism — after all, one might want a place in the Civil Service later on and there's the question of the Non-Communist Oath, isn't there? Sunday marching, after all, was merely a social distinction not a political statement.

It is tempting to believe at least half of Britain's Beatniks graduated to become ad-men and rock promoters, so image-conscious were they. They dressed the part, ate the part and listened the part. The perfect Beatnik aspired to be "a hot-eyed fellow in beard and sandals, or a 'chick' with straggly hair, long black stockings, heavy eye make-up and an expression which could indicate either hauteur or uneasy digestion". The duffle-coat was ubiquitous along with mushapen jeans, fishermen's sweaters and desert boots. Occasionally a brave soul would wander barefoot for half-an-hour because "shoes insulated the body from life-forces which could only be gained through direct contact with Mother Earth", but as they were also damned effective in keeping the dogshit from between your toes this tended only to be a 'tourist-activity' reserved for Jazz Festivals.

However, dressing the part was only the tip of the iceberg — the performance was the thing. To be really cool you should pose for the Press in your quarter's pad with a bag over your head holding a disc saying SOON, like a disappointed competitor thrown off the panel of *Juke Box Jury*. The Beatnik lifestyle was ornately irrelevant to everything, it was important only to be Seriously Misunderstood — "they loiter about in furnished rooms without carpets, reminiscing about how long it is since they had a wash, diluting their reefers with cut plug until they wouldn't harm a child, criticising one another's novels that they haven't even started writing yet, combing the crumbs out of their beards, coming out with statements like 'Death is not quite an umbrella', reading bits from the *Huang Po Ch'an Hsin Fa Yao*, rifling one another's pockets for

lumps of old salami sandwiches on the sly, boasting about all the women they've frustrated, and cursing the Welfare State for depriving them of the will to blow safes".

Women Beatniks, in much the same style as Ted's 'Girls', were strictly seen and not heard. They were expected to droop inelegantly and devotedly in their intellectual superior's wake and merely bathe in the reflected light of His glory — "The boon the Beats really seem to want from femininity is financial support. The mature bohemian," according to Beatnik principles, "is one whose woman works full time."

LIKE ANY YOUTH CULTURE Musical Identity was very important to Beatniks. Briefly, this meant Progressive Jazz or anything performed on an instrument of ethnic origin (excluding Morris bells) by a 400-year-old Buddhist ten thousand feet above sea level. Failing that, anything which could be played on the paper and comb in an acoustically distorting bathroom would suffice. What the Beatniks didn't want was anything which anybody else might like. Acker Bolk made them "run for cover with their jerseys pulled over their heads". What they wanted was *revoli* music — "To be quite candid with you they want *torvare*. What makes them *real* happy is some oaf in smelly clothes giving out with the poetry, backed by a combo of vibes, flute, drums and spinet playing West Coast twelve-tone mainstream mambo-jumbo at sixes and sevens and every man for himself."

They were urged to "join the Jazz Book Club as soon as possible". Thus, for a mere 45 bob, the erstwhile Beatnik could obtain six monthly choices at seven shillings a go plus knowing to his infinite comfort that he was one of a "keen, knowledgeable, critical, hip minority". As if this wasn't just too too, "all the books are hardbacks chosen by Rex Harris and the Hon Gerald Lascelles" (who was described as "dead trendy"). Ultimately, Zen willing, you could acquire "*Enjoying Jazz* — a primer for 'young fans' by Rex Harris".

The ladies, of course, had to keep pace with their men's little peccadilloes and their handy guide to *Etiquette For Extroverts* urged them to "go to your local record shop and ask to hear (a) beat, (b) trad, folk, rhythm and blues, (c) modern jazz. Only foolish little girls rush into

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# The poisonous rasp

WORDS: BIBA KOPF

PHOTO: LOUIS JAMMES

"SS AMERICA, OFF JERSEY COAST. LAGUES AND GENTLEMEN, THERE IS NO CAUSE FOR ALARM. WE HAVE MINOR PROBLEM IN THE BOILER ROOM, BUT EVERYTHING IS UNDER . . . (SOUND EFFECTS OF A NUCLEAR BLAST. EXPLOSIONS RIP THE BOAT . . .)"

HIS LOVELY PARCHMENT VOICE CRACKLES across worn recordings like a gentleman newscaster's on World Service. It emerges from the ether with details of the latest disaster coming over the wires. Its tone suggests an age when manners stood for shit, but nevertheless set their dignified bearers in good stead with sororities, senators and rogues alike. At least until it sinks in what's said. Yet, educated and authoritative, it lends credence to the strangest stories and the most wayward theories, social and scientific, and it would be no less persuasive endorsing a new brand of snake repellent.

If William Seward Burroughs, born in 1914 in St. Louis, had ever failed as a writer, he could have easily made a living as a medicine show man. Indeed, the pre-eminent position he has held this past 15 years may be down to his innovative interrogations of language/control relations, but his popularity can be just as easily attributed to the canny aspect of his character that comes through in his public readings and recordings.

With a sidestall Barker's grasp of the common desire to gawp at the geek, his performances condense the bizarre and the bilious, the B picture, dime novel and penny dreadful elements of his work into savage, often brilliantly funny routines. They're invariably spiked with callous junk humour, gallows eroticism, delayed drop jokes and poisonous kiss-off lines, all delivered from behind a big desk in a wind-dried deadpan punctuated by the odd, rattling cackle.

These routines are not mere nightclub turns. They present withering visions of a nightmare age all the more illuminating for their refusal to rage against the greed and evil that drives their protagonists to despicable acts. No human cruelty surprises or throws him and no utopian ideal fuses his gaze. His

comedy is as merciless as the politicians, pillagers, bigots, narcs, cops and conmen it's drawn from. And, whatever the scenario, they're always exact, for Burroughs himself is invariably present at the scene of abomination, masquerading as William Lee, the invisible hombre, a spectre silently soaking up the nuances of speech and calloused laughter for future use. His genre parodies and caricature stereotypes are icily splendid creations, ranging from Clem Snide: "private asshole" to the wily wizened old Sarge, who cracks: "WHAT THE BLOODY FUCKING HELL ARE CIVILIANS FOR?" OLD SARGE BELLOWS FROM HERE TO ETERNITY: "SOLOERS' PAY."

Fortunately for the likes of Lenny Bruce, Burroughs didn't really publicise his routines until he returned to America in the early 70s. Bruce's raps have nothing on Burroughs' precise raps.

The savagery of his satire always separated him from his Beat contemporaries, whose gushing sentiments have barely outlived the spontaneity of their creation. Unlike Kerouac, who he affectionately credits with the invention of William Lee, he had no romantic ideal of Mom's Apple Pie America to go sour on him. Nor did he ever share Allen Ginsberg's bighearted Marxist plan for universal buddhism. He has an absolute distrust of control organisms, the bureaucracies and the surveillance agencies that reproduce out of them like germ warfare, regardless of which wing originates them. Not that he gains any satisfaction from being proved right over and over. A deeply private person, his greatest wish is to be left alone, and he has an extensive armoury to defend it. He practises MOB rule: My Own Business. And he desires others to do the same.

"I AM NOT ONE OF THOSE WEAK-SPIRITED SAPPY AMERICANS WHO WANT TO BE LIKED BY ALL THE PEOPLE AROUND THEM. I DON'T CARE IF PEOPLE HATE MY GUTS. I ASSUME MOST OF THEM DO. THE IMPORTANT QUESTION IS WHAT ARE THEY IN A POSITION TO DO ABOUT IT. MY AFFECTIONS, BEING CONCENTRATED ON A FEW PEOPLE, ARE NOT SPREAD ALL OVER HELL IN A VILE ATTEMPT

TO PLACATE SULKY, WORTHLESS SHITS. OF COURSE, THEY COULD CUT OFF MY JUNK. THAT HAPPENED ONCE AND I BEEFED ALOUD, LONG AND HIGH UP, STRAIGHT TO THE HEAO CROAKER OF THIS CRUMMY TRAP . . ."

SO WHAT DRIVES him to write, to publicise his existence? The algebra of need? The geometry of junk? Certainly, his phantasmagoric visions were partly parboiled during his cycle of addiction (outlined in the precise, hyperreal *junky*). Coming down from drugs and the horror of accidentally killing his wife Joan in a William Tell shooting game sparked a craving for contact. In the candid, immensely affecting introduction added to his second novel *Queer*, written 30 years ago but published for the first time this year, he agonises over the period: "While it was I who wrote *junky*, I feel I was being written in *Queer*. I was also raking pains to ensure further writing, so as to set the record straight: writing as inoculation. As soon as something is written, it loses its power of surprise, just as a virus loses its advantage when a weakened virus has created alerted antibodies."

In the same piece he posits the birth of his routines as a method of transfixing the men he craves in place of junk. He needs an audience's recognition "to cover a shocking disintegration". Instead of satire, those early attention grabbing routines are pure, forming, funny and frequently vile inventions.

"POOR BOBO CAME TO A STICKY END. HE WAS RIDING IN THE DUC DE VENTRE'S HISPANO-SUIZA WHEN HIS FALLING FILES BLEW OUT OF THE CAR AND WRAPPED AROUND THE REAR WHEEL. HE WAS COMPLETELY GUTTED, LEAVING AN EMPTY SHELL SITTING THERE ON THE GIRAFFE SKIN UNHOLSTERY . . ."

The narrator's desperation for contact reflects Burroughs' need to record the hollowiness of the comedown. His introduction disarmingly concludes: "I am forced to the appalling conclusion that I would never have become a writer but for Joan's death, and to a realisation of the extent to which this event has motivated

and formulated my writing. I live with the constant threat of possession, and a constant need to escape from possession, from control, so the death of Joan brought me in contact with the invader, the Ugly Spirit, and maneuvered me into a lifelong struggle, in which I have had no choice except to write my way out."

His escape necessitated a break with narrative linearity — a form of restricting consciousness passed down by the Control Organism. Luckily his longtime friend Brion Gysin smuggled into him the tools to accomplish his breakout: the Cut-Up.

IF THE LASTING pleasure of William Burroughs

is his routines, his most explosive legacy is still the Cut-Up method Gysin bequeathed him in the late '50s, after accidentally cutting through the morning papers. The chance rearrangement of text fragments alerted them to the possibilities — first touched upon by the Surrealists — of releasing new meanings from old words.

Received words place a padlock on meaning. In certain combinations they overpower the nervous system, controlling its actions. The Cut-Up method is a means of scrambling those early signals. Out of his early experiments, Burroughs elaborated a Fold-In montage technique that allowed him to record the totality of

everyday experience, to get the whole of everything into a passage all at once.

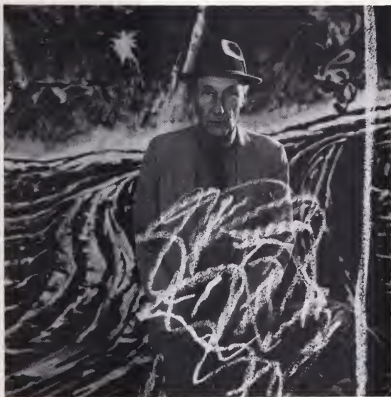
Burroughs' exhilaration at its discovery is best felt in the trilogy *The Naked Lunch*, *The Soft Machine* and *The Ticket That Exploded*. Its practical applications outside writing in a continuing war to reclaim language from the electronic information media are most usefully and frequently hilariously discussed in *The Job*. His own tape experiments can be heard on the LP *Nothing Here Now But The Recordings* (Industrial).

Burroughs has since temporarily set aside mechanical methods at spontaneity to further narrative experiments in time and space. But

others have developed his ideas elsewhere. Though his direct participation in music is rare — unlike Kerouac and Ginsberg — his impact has been enormous. Since the '60s groups have plundered him for names and striking imagery. Bowie wrote lyrics under the influence of Cut-Up. Eno meddled with randomness.

The industrial groups advanced his legacy farthest. Throbbing Gristle and Cabaret Voltaire blew up his cinematic Fold-In techniques into split screen/fracturing noise disorientations. The dub collaborations of Adrian Sherwood and Mark Stewart are invigorating

CONTINUED ON PAGE 40



FROM CUT UP TO QUEER, THE LAST GREAT GENTLEMAN OF BEAT WRITING STILL STRUGGLES FREE OF THE CONTROL OF WORDS.



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BEBOP CREATED A climate for new directions. Maybe it was the breakneck tempos, maybe it was the Dada irreverence with which the new music mocked, knocked and melted old songs into new shapes, but the net effect was that spontaneous free-wheeling improvisations in several kinds, like June, began bursting out all over. Kerouac wrote on the hoof. Singers dealt gibberish, oo-top-sh-bamming like tipstons on Dervish Derby Day. Comics, hitting on all the uncontrollable jubilation that had entered nightclub entertainment, raised their game from gags to wacky wig-bubbles.

Richard Buckley, neither black nor jazz musician, has been working his comedy routines back in Prohibition Chicago, but he came into his own with the rise of bebop. *Evergreen Review*, City Lights Bookshop, Grove Press and The Bears. "Negroes spoke a language of such power, purity and beauty I found it irresistible," he declared. "I could not resist this magical way of speaking, nor the great power it had for good in its purity and sweetness."

The details of his life are conjectural. He was born around the turn of the century in California and was part American Indian. It is said that he led 16 naked citizens through the lobby of the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, and set up his own Church of the Living Swing to showcase his sermons and a brace of belly-dancers, which was summarily disestablished when the Vice Squad screened the scene. Like Lenny Bruce, his most important disciple, Buckley made it on jazz bills, playing the 1959 Monterey Jazz Festival shortly before he died.

Trying to classify Lord Buckley reminds me of the instructions on an old Ahmed Abdul Malik album which read, "File under Middle-Eastern and Hip". He points in so many directions. The pipes, like the later Tom Waits, take a bit off Louis Armstrong, but the delivery is actor-manager's ham. The pith helmet and waxed moustache are vaudeville's version of the British Raj, while the squishy transcendentalist philosophy blows a soap bubble towards the hippy era. The hip high semantic is jazz. The comedy comes from a



## The Hiperama, Jack

L O R D B U C K L E Y

cartoonist's imagination in which single-characteristic responses govern all human behaviour. Robert Crumb is waiting in the wings. "Rhythm is the key to everything," Buckley proclaimed, "runs the whole swingin' thing." It certainly tied an improbable parcel for him, the Sun Ra of humour.

PROBABLY HIS BEST KNOWN ROUTINE is "The Naz", a hipster's version of scenes from the life of Jesus, the Nazarene. At a stroke, Buckley cuts through all the New English cork-tipped moderation to put his Naz back on the barker's stand, selling two-cent snake-oil. This Jesus dishes out miracle licks with a SHAZAAM!, straightening cats with bent frames, knocking the corners off the squares, putting the Word on the boys. "Dig and thou shalt be dug! Drag not and thou shalt not be drug!"

The recorded version climaxes on the feeding of the five thousand, featuring one of Buckley's lung-bursting chin music cadenzas "The Naz is a-talkin' and a-swingin' with how pretty the hour, how pretty the flower, how pretty you, how pretty she, how pretty the tree (Naz had them pretty eyes, wanted everybody to see to pin the golden rosette of reality) and they is havin' such a wailin' swingin' glorianna style stompin' like that before you know it, it was scuffin' time and these pou' cats is forty miles outa town, ain't nobody got the first biscuit! 'We wuz diggin' so hard what you wuz puttin' down, Naz, we didn't pre-para. We goofed!' Even in flat print, you can see what Buckley means about rhythm.

From the Sweet Double Hipness of the Holy Land, Buckley turned his supercharged historical shovel on Shakespeare, Vasco Da Gama, the Marquis de Sade and Gandhi. "You gotta be a reincarnation cat like myself, you gotta re-dig and re-call the ball," he advised audi-

ences. His jive eulogy on Shakespeare, "Willie the Shake", is, as usual, a carnie appreciation of the mystery of genius. "They gave this cat five cents - worth of ink and a nickel's-worth of paper, and he sat down and wrote up such a breeze - WHAM! - that's all there WAS, jack! There was no more. Everybody got off. Pen in hand, he was a Mutha Superior."

Samples of The Bard include a greasy funeral oration from *Julius Caesar* that opens with "Hipsters, flipsters and finger-poppin' daddies/Knock me your lobes" and movingly concludes on "Dig me hard, my tucker is there in the coffin with Caesar! And yea, I must stay cool 'til it flippeth back to me". File under Mark the Spark knocking a note on his main day buddy cat.

All Buckley's raps on the famous inflate to blimp proportions. He is as high on himself as he is on his subject matter, and he probably believed his line on universal love, reincarnation and the holiness of everything while groping his dancers. It is that force of conviction that lifts him high above the Arthur English and Stanley Unwin routines of garbled word substitutions. Buckley comes on like a man possessed, and his garble was marble. Some of the surviving raps like "God's Own Drunk" and "Subconscious Mind" are weird and unsettling, you can't imagine what audience they were aimed at any more. Others, like his "Gettysburg Address" and "The Bad Rapping Of The Marquis de Sade", proclaim a crackpot libertarian. "All cats and kitties, red, white or blue, are created level, in front." Appropriately, Henry Miller wrote the recommendation to the City Lights edition of Buckley's *Hiperama Of The Classics*, and typically approved "a new vein, leading from the modulla oblongata and the cloaca maxima".

Solid.

IN PITH HELMET  
AND MOUSTACHE,  
THE RAPPER OF HIP  
HIGH SEMANTICS  
AND CHORDICLER  
OF THE BARD  
AND THE NAZ.

BY BRIAN CASE.



## The daisy pulled

BY SASKIA BARON

FROM THE LOFTS TO THE STREETS TO THE BEACH AND BACK, 30 YEARS OF BEAT ON CELLULOID.

SOMETIMES IT SEEMS that America invented four things: jazz, movies, teenagers and the open road. And having come up with these brilliant ideas, it was never quite sure what to do with them. The films that came out of American beatnik culture from the late 50s onwards, often have those inventions as their theme, and meet the same confusion.

Beatnik films could be divided into three categories: those which are made from beat stories, like Kerouac's *The Subterraneans* ('60), or as biopics of beat figures, like *Haribon* ('79). Others use the perceived beatnik way of life as yet another moral scourge preying on the nation's youth, such as *Beat Girl* ('62), while some playfully mock beat artists' existentialist

pretensions, as Roger Corman's cheerful *Bucket Of Blood* did with enormous speed in '59. Tony Hancock followed suit in a rather darker comic vein in *The Rebel* ('60).

Then there are those which were inspired by the spirit of beat culture: Shirley Clarke's *The Cool World* ('63) and John Cassavetes' *Shadows* ('59) being two excellent independent movies which used unHollywood, neo-realistic, quasi-documentary filming to portray aspects of black, urban existence. Both filmmakers consciously paid back some of the debt the beats owed to the creators of the jazz which inspired the predominantly white beats, albeit indirectly. And in their evocation of the traumas and rituals of growing up in the city, and surrounded by a hostile society, Cassavetes and Clarke both caught something of the essence of beat — a restless striving after a different American dream from that which Hollywood sold. One could also argue that into this



TOP LEFT: SHADOWS (JOHN CASSAVETES) 1959; LELIA GOLDONI IS ALWAYS IN THE KITCHEN FAR LEFT: PULL MY DAISY (ROBERT FRANK, ALFRED LESLIE) 1959; GREGORY CORSO, LARRY RIVERS AND JACK KEROUAC ABOVE: THE COOL WORLD (SHIRLEY CLARKE) 1963; DUKE AND LU ANNE GO TO CONEY ISLAND

category fall such later films as Bob Rafelson's *Five Easy Pieces* ('70) or *The King Of Marvin Gardens* ('72), and also Jim Jarmusch's wonderfully laconic road movie, *Stranger Than Paradise* ('84). They qualify by dint of their directors' dry humour, their characters' disillusionment and strained obsessions with such subjects as the road, story-telling and male friendships.

BUT BEFORE THAT, there were films made by the Beats themselves. One of the characteristics of the 'movement' was the way artists would act, poets paint, musicians make movies – a desire to swap media, which while arguably not producing 'great art' did result in some fascinating experiments. The chief among these being *Pull My Daisy*, directed by the painter Alfred Leslie and the photographer Robert Frank in 1958. This black and white, half-hour movie features such beat heroes as

poets Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso and Robert Orlovsky, painters Alice Neel and Larry Rivers (who also played saxophone), and a young French actress who just happened to have fallen in among these hip New Yorkers, the yet-to-be-famous Delphine Seyrig. Jack Kerouac wrote the voice-over, which describes what's going on on-screen, interspersed with music by David Amram. The cast list is enough to make any self-respecting '50s nostalgist rush to the cinema; the result, at least in its current print condition, can be a little disappointing. Last time it played at the Scala the celebrated Kerouac rap was hard to follow, and the film was beginning to acquire that 'patina' which makes itself more conspicuous than the film beneath it – one too many atmospheric crackles and an over-reddent graininess (don't ask what of)...

In some ways *Pull My Daisy* has become a film which it's more interesting to read and dream about than it is actually to watch, even though it broke new ground in its day. At the San Francisco Film Festival in '59 it won a prize, and was seen by hip critics on both the East and West Coasts as a major step forward –

out of Hollywood's glossy shadows, into the light shining out from European filmmaking developments. That year Jonas Mekas's magazine *Film Culture* gave it an award for 'its modernity and its honesty, its sincerity and humility, its imagination and its humour, its youth, its freshness, and its truth... It breathes an immediacy that the cinema of today vitally needs if it is to be a living and contemporary art.' While one mustn't blame a film for the hype that surrounds it, it seems impossible that a 29-minute movie following some maverick characters racing around a loft, getting drunk, reciting poetry and falling over, can live up to such rhetoric. Criticism came soon: the avant-garde director Maya Deren described *Pull My Daisy* as 'one ungodly, clumsy mess in a frantic search for a single different note'. And ten years after the film was made, its co-director Alfred Leslie pointed out in *Village Voice* that *Daisy* was not quite the

free-form piece of improvisation it was once claimed to be. The direction of *Pull My Daisy*, he wrote, was 'no more random or improvised than Antonioni or Rossellini... the set was dressed, copies of the script were made for the cast. Suggestions were made as to what to wear. A shooting schedule was planned... Each scene was rehearsed and shot three times.' Even Jack Kerouac's voice-over, which popular myth would have it came directly from a pot- and alcohol-induced haze, was recorded at least four times and cut together to produce one track.

But if *Pull My Daisy*'s beatnik credentials are somewhat tarnished by its co-director's revelations about its self-conscious production, its 'stars' still exert a pull on the fans. Last year saw the American release of *Kerouac*, a dull documentary made up of ageing, talking-head beats reminiscing about the time Jack got drunk/fell over the sofa/made love while at their loft. There's some television footage of the man himself looking edgy on a middle-brow chat show, and some half-baked dramatisation of Kerouac's fiction.

MEANWHILE THE MOVIE OPTION comes and goes on *On The Road* for Hollywood's mixture of titillation and morality. In *Bachelor Party*, a silly coming-of-age sex romp, its hero is forced to have sex with a grubby young beatnik girl. And this in 1984, 25 years after Roger Corman first mocked the beats and Hollywood turned the young black rebel hero of Kerouac's *The Subterraneans* into a young white woman just going through a difficult phase.

Both the methods and the heroes of beatnik culture seem to have been better off when expressed or portrayed indirectly, either when taken up by the later avant garde: Ron Rice, George Kuchar and Paul Morrissey, or seen as shadow characters cast in later films. The two roles played by Jack Nicholson in Rafelson's films embody the archetypal beat hero's confusions. In *Five Easy Pieces* he's torn between two identities: he can either be a middle-class concert pianist or an oil-rigger. His character's callousness towards his family and girlfriend, his aimless travelling, all seems to say beat, without the need to spell it out. Equally, in the two brothers of *The King Of Marvin Gardens*, one a charming petty crook, the other a late-night radio DJ spinning prose poems over the air, you can see the beat heroes grown old. They roam the boardwalk of Atlantic City as Shirley Clarke's young lions once did Coney Island's in *The Cool World*.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 33

record shops on Saturday mornings yelling 'Have you got some Beat?' Sensible girls wait for the assistant to be free rather early in the morning and then whisper innocently that they don't know what Beat is and want to hear some. The assistant may consider you to be a pretty sick chick but she's unlikely to priggishly reject your request because her job is to sell gramophone records – even to complete yahoos.

Life was fraught with difficulties for the little woman. When visiting Jazz Clubs she was severely instructed not to "wriggle or giggle, nor look too much like a frightened bat under the Himalayan stars of the regulars" and, horror of horrors, not to start behaving as if "visited by a Holy-Roller seizure as soon as The Group starts playing". It was an irreparable mistake to "stomp away all by your convulsive little self" when all the laid-back Beats were "wishing that the particular Group would go back to Llandudno and stay there". On top of this strict code of ethics she was

faced with the problem of smoothing life for her soul-mate's troubled spirit. The poor Beatnik poet had to condition himself to "a life unshared with many and misunderstood by most". While attempting to recite in a works canteen he would have to face such humiliations as paint-shop workers who blithely stated, "I don't think poetry will interest the blokes here. We come in for a meal and a chat". "The manner in which these nousemotes will ignore his music is enough to make him wish to kiss a pig." Whether the soother of souls was expected to resemble said pig is not stated; however, she was reassured that when her beloved became too unhappy she could "take him to The Poets Corner at Westminster Abbey and stand with him awhile in silent contemplation of those who suffered before him". This, of course, was a desperate measure only to be considered when he had reached the stage "of wanting to chuck 'O for the steadfast burn of an hirudine jockstrap' out of the window".

THE BEATNIKS' LIFE WAS A short and inglorious

one. They comprised intrinsically the generation who went to university in 1958 and graduated in 1962. With their graduation they brought in Wilson's Yuppie 'Labour' Government who reassured them that council houses would really look like council houses (i.e. they would gradually fall down) and that the artisans' high post-war wages were going to crumble soon. They backed a good horse; in due course the houses fell down and the wages, predictably, crumbled, and with the walls of the New Jerusalem razed effectively by the New Consumerism the Beatniks could give up and go home. Back to the Cretonne and Chintz, the Gnocchi and Gnomes, the B.B.C. and Broadcasting House. The number of places were being cut at universities (Comprehensive educations couldn't compete); the unemployment figures were rising (let's see you buy a fridge now, Mr Bricklayer); and Margaret Thatcher was kissing cows as a practice run for the big time . . .

God was in his semi and all was right with the world.

## D A V E B R U B E C K

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

most modern sounds in jazz.

History might be on the point of leaving Brubeck this way, but the records which are still around – actually much of Brubeck's 50s and 60s work is unavailable – don't seem nearly so damning. There's nothing that challenges the intellectual muscle of Tristano or George Russell, but there isn't meant to be. The Quartet spent much of its time playing standards: Brubeck's originals are just part of the flow, and the best of them – "The Duke" and "In Your Own Sweet Way" – have a melodic strength that has turned them into jazz standards themselves. Like the MJQ, this was essentially a chamber group that dealt in discreet, finely-tuned formalities. The rhythm section actually drove harder than memory suggests: when the pianist drifts away, bass and drums hold the line together.

The slightly celebrated *Jazz At Oberlin* set is usually held up as the apex of what the group could do. The playing on this 1953 live date is definitely spirited (everyone in the group was allegedly in a bad temper), and there's a virile edge here and in *Jazz At The College Of The Pacific* that they usually miss. But virility isn't the same as excellence. Virtue comes instead through the porcelain elegance of Desmond's lines, the occasional felicities of Brubeck's writing. None of the records really stand out, but equally there are lovely moments on each of them. "Tangerine", "When You Wish Upon A Star", "Wonderful Copenhagen" and more prefigure the climate that Bill Evans would inhabit much more completely.

THE TWO RECORDS that gave Brubeck his

biggest hits, *Time Out* and *Take Further Out* (now available as a CBS double set), appeared after the Brubeck boom had apparently peaked. "Blue Rondo A La Turk", "Take Five", "It's A Raggy Waltz" and "Unsquare Dance" are no less memorable, perhaps no less 'soulful' than Cannonball's "Sack O'Woe" or Jimmy Smith's "The Sermon". "Bluettes", from these sessions, is wonderfully lyrical, a slow blues in 3/4 that distils the best qualities of the Quartet. Beautifully recorded (by Teo Macero), these albums do a decent amount of justice to the group's work.

In most respects, Brubeck would suffer in the jazz memory. Big-scale popularity in your own lifetime is always held against you by

posterity. Brubeck's group had little to do with the Beats – Brubeck himself was too old! – but their path seemed to enter the Beat philosophy: music as art for art's sake, jazz drawing succour from the classical cats. Most of all, it was the surface sweetness of his music that drew in the dilettante element which was the Beat way. It sounded light and hip and serious and it could be drawn on for a soundtrack to something else.

No wonder the co-eds took to Brubeck so painlessly. But if it underlined the sham dedications of a movement that dared not go too deep, Dave Brubeck's Quartet still made a sound worth keeping. Every "Take Five" busker in your town will testify to that.

## WILLIAM BURROUGHS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 35

examples of Burroughs applied to extreme dismantling of the consciousness.

IN THE END (which thankfully looks like never arriving – at 72 his US publishers have signed him to a five-book deal) it matters little which method Burroughs chooses to deploy. Each is worked through with an absolute determination to wrestle words out of the mouth of the Control Organism and into a context that might do it most damage. Whether it's through pitiless caricature or confounding Cut-Up, his strike capability rarely falters. And when his various methods intersect he can produce image flakes that are at once meltingly beautiful and devastatingly violent.

Witness one routine's poisonous kiss-off

line: "LIKE A PRISONER WHO KILLED HIS GUARD, HE STEPS LIGHTLY THROUGH AN OPEN DOOR."

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## ROUTINE SOURCES

EARLY ROUTINES (*Cadogan Edition*)  
A WILLIAM BURROUGHS READER (*Picador*)  
RE/SEARCH 4/5 on Burroughs, Gysin and Thobbing Gristle (*Re/Search*)  
QUEER (*Viking*)  
THE ADDING MACHINE (*John Calder*)  
THE DOCTOR IS ON THE MARKET LP (*Let Temps Modernes*)  
WILLIAM BURROUGHS/JOHN GIORNO and YOU'RE THE GUY I WANT TO SHARE MY MONEY WITH LPs (*Gianro Poetry systems, US imports*)





so in america when the sun goes down and i sit on the old  
broken-down river pier watching the long long skies over  
new jersey and sense all that raw land that rolls in one  
unbelievable bulge over to the west coast and all that road  
going and all the people dreaming  
in the immensity of it . . .

## JACK KEROUAC

ON THE ROAD, 1957

JACK KEROUAC (1922–1969) recorded the life of the American traveller, the wayfarer of beat, as it was in the 50s. *THE LISTENER* said: "Adds up to one hell of a philosophy of life." Amen.



---

*Salif Keita tries to hold on to his music in an eager western world.*

# Message from Mali

WORDS: MARK SINKER

PHOTOS: NICK WHITE

WELL, WE'RE SUPPOSED to be meeting him up around Stalingrad, but this turns out less simple than it sounds: there's four exits and we've so far only found two, and it's starting to rain. Nick sets his face and plunges off to where he says the map is telling him the other exits are. Nicole and I follow, pointing unhelpfully in every other direction, and explaining wrongly why he must be wrong. He's correct and a bit cross because of it, and stalks into a bar with little Soma to get her out of the rain. Fair enough. I'm the one who said I knew what Salif Keita looked like, when Nicole talked to him over the phone. So I'm posted outside the third exit, and sure enough,

"I'M A KEITA, FOR SURE, BUT IT'S JUST A WAY OF TELLING ME FROM ALL THE OTHER SALIFES! I BELONG TO A TIME THAT'S QUITE UNLIKE THAT OF MY ANCESTORS. I WANT SOCIETY TO SHUT SO THAT A GIROT COULD BECOME A NOBLE AND VICE VERSA — SO THAT A KEITA CAN BECOME A RECORDING ARTIST. I'M ABSOLUTELY AGAINST THE CASTE SYSTEM. I'M NOT JUST PLAYING FOR FUN, EVEN WHEN I'M IN MY OWN VILLAGE." SALIF KEITA, INTERVIEWED BY RADIO FRANCE INTERNATIONAL, EARLY 1985.

Keita comes round the corner with his wife. And I do know him, and how this is him, and how the other man couldn't have been him. He's been waiting up by the fourth exit. He points it out to me, but it's well on the way to

Belgium, and all I can say is, Stalingrad is a very *disperded* metro station.

Oddly enough, the man I mistook for him walks into the bar a little later, and Salif's wife gives him a little "Oh" of surprise when she sees him. As if the coincidence is a little unnerving for her too. But the other man is big and hefty. Salif is quite small, not frail exactly, but a little removed from the noise of the world, somehow. The photos I've seen, on LP covers and elsewhere, always turn out blurred and ancient-looking. As if the camera eye isn't positive that he was there when it actually clicked. He has a sad, other-worldly look, and he sings the same way, a high drifting wail across the Latin-African desert-swing that Les Ambassadeurs Internationaux lightly and mournfully contrive

HE HASN'T HAD THE SUCCESS that others have had by coming to Paris. Travelling hasn't been the starburst of broadening renown that it's been for other voices and faces when they've reached maybe a plateau of success in their home continent. The record that's been being negotiated with Martin Messonnier (who produced King Sunny Ade's three Island LPs) for almost as long as I can recall, he doesn't even want to talk about. Presumably all this movement has affected the music.

"It goes through constant revolution, it keeps being transformed. In Mali I was largely drawing on folklore, but translating it into the modern idiom for the instruments. When we moved to the Ivory Coast, it added another dimension, because you can hear all the different African styles there. And every new band-member means new influences. Coming here meant another transformation, though not an eradication of the original."

Was it a conscious decision to move? I mean, it wasn't just for economic reasons (Mali is one of Africa's poorest countries, with the Sahara slowly eating across it: fabled Timbuktu is more or less a ghost town with the trade routes that used to intersect there long ago dried up.)

"No, we wanted to grow. And we wanted a

different sort of recognition. In Mali the reaction wasn't anything special. Musicians are just musicians there. We wanted to broaden our understanding, and just to become known. In Mali, in Africa generally, you can often just be playing without it being important."

Across the tinkle and blabber of a mousy French cafe, the tape isn't catching all he's saying. Nicole is invaluable as a translator, and I can follow him fairly well, or could at the time, but the care he's putting into his answers is being dissipated by the occasional roar of a coffee percolator made by Lockheed, and the general attrition of translation. The coffee's horrible as well, rather surprisingly.

Although the role of a *griot* is obviously going to be different when he's transposed out of the tight structure of his culture, Keita still sings about the same things, the shaping accounts of regional and family history that shore up the walls of Mali's world. He's acting now, he says, as a conductor of his culture into a new context — to do anything else would be senseless. But he's in a strange position, for all this, because as a Keita he's from an immensely exalted family. His ancestor Soundjata delivered Mali from the 13th-century tyrant Sumanguru; he was born to high estate.

"Making music at all was a problem. In a way that's why I left home, and Africa. It's not so bad now, the family have accepted it. In the end. They had to, I've been singing now for 15 years!"

ORIGINALLY HE'D INTENDED to be a teacher, but that didn't work out. He began singing in 1970 with the Rail Band of the Motel Bamako, and went on to join Les Ambassadeurs, and to form a partnership with an older musician, Kante Manfila — exploiting the superior studio facilities in the Ivory Coast, they began to make a name for themselves. Manfila, in fact, was already a respected contributor to the various traditional and folkloric fabrics of both Guinea and Senegal. His grained and singing guitar style is clearly an influence on Keita's own voice — it sets off his sung intensity with strange invention.



## S A L I F K E I T A

Manfila only followed Keita to Paris recently, and they've yet to record there. Meanwhile, Les Ambassadeurs have more than ever opened up their style to foreign influence. A pure African music will never carry, says Keita, because it doesn't acknowledge international conventions. In the end, it has to aspire to being a universal music. Isn't there a danger that specifically Malian elements get swamped in a universal blend?

"No. All the music that I listen to was brought to life in Africa. In the end. For me, Jazz is deeply African. And so's Reggae. Dance rhythms are all ours. It's important to keep to those. And a lot of melodies are pure Africa. There are lots of outside influences but the deep root is Africa, even though Europe and America maybe have made melody a speciality. Look at Sunny Ade's music. It's great, a wonderful sound, but it doesn't translate. Even with the help of a big label. A big label will only really push the broader kind of thing... once you've heard one of his songs, you've heard them all. The rhythms never vary."

The influences in the early songs aren't hard to recognise. There's a kind of tentative gaucheness about their treatment that sets them off from a master of appropriation like Manu on one side, and the slick and bland supperclub crossover hucksters on the other. Keita's voice rides out of the sound across a willing-up of emotion and of history that displaces the most obvious borrowings, in even the clumsiest early Latin echo. And by the time of "Mandjou", the identity is unshakable, the transformation immutable. Manfila's guitar and Keita's voice fall across the light throbbing pulse to shape the world quite down to their own patterns.

Have any projects you're particularly concerned with at the moment?

"Oh yes. But the labels aren't terribly interested in African music as a whole. They're interested in voices. CBS wanted my voice. But they weren't interested in my music. They don't believe in it. I don't mind doing what they want. But I want to perform my music as well. The things that Mory Kanté's done, for

example, it's his voice, but the sound's completely westernised."

It's a problem, no getting away from it, and really to tackle it successfully you have to have generated a momentum of your own, a kind of flare round your own identity that ensures that influence doesn't overwhelm. Keita knows the value of the new technologies, looks forward to a time when he can use video, for example, to add to the power of his sung histories. For the moment all we have is his voice, thrown up to a pitch just beyond his perfect control, immaculate and whip-mw, sharp and sad. He throws the old ways into hazard every time he sings, just by singing, but he has also to pass the histories on, or the secret truths at the heart of them, at exactly the same time. It makes it hard.

Maybe all we can manage until then – until I learn Mandinka or he learns English (which he's already beginning to do) – is a sort of trick phenomenology, to treat appropriately with this gentle, mannerly philosopher, of high birth and noble purpose: perform a careful, thoughtful reduction of the contingent, crazy world to universal certainties. And take that to mean, in this context, reducing it to the broad and flowing curves of his music. Not that we hear it the way he does. We don't, won't, can't, not yet. But there's a core of it that's the same for us all. Somehow, at some depth of care and introspective sensory recap, we must strip down the aural signal to a possible shared impression. A wild, startling, small fragment of impression in motion. It's a start. Let's start.

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# QUARTET BOOKS

## SCREEN REVIEW

RICHARD COOK PREVIEWS BERTRAND TAVERNIER'S *ROUND MIDNIGHT*

CHRIS PARKER WATCHES ART BLAKEY IN *FATHER TIME*

### ROUND MIDNIGHT

Directed by Bertrand Tavernier  
(Columbia)

JAZZ FILMS HAVE NEVER made major box office. Here is one starring a tenor saxophonist playing his greatest master and playing himself, a man almost devoured by the life he's had to lead. The picture is tied to the pace of Dexter Gordon's rolling gait and thickened speech: it's obsessively slow, grey and stately.

It's also, against the odds, probably the best reality-fiction about jazzmen the cinema has so far provided. Bertrand Tavernier has directed a story that's easy to pick cynical holes in, but he has worried a great, sombre canvas out of his materials. His major resource is Dexter Gordon's face, an instrument as expressive as his saxophone. Gordon plays the displaced giant, Dale Turner, an amalgam of Lester Young and Bud Powell, come to Paris because – as he tells the dying Herschel Evans at the start of the film – well, he actually gives no reason. Turner's actions seem to have an existential motive. He is tied to the grudging work of the jazzman, the longed-for club residencies, the hard labour for patrons who refuse him drinks and good money, but his mind and his art are set haphazardly on higher things.

At the Blue Note Club, on his first night, Turner walks cumbrously on to the stage, slumps into a chair, wearily raises the mouthpiece to his lips and mugs his way through "As Time Goes By". In the street outside, a fan named Francis sits spellbound by a ventilator, too broke to go inside. "He played like a god, that Dale Turner," he says later, though the deity he heard sounded terribly worn-out. All Dale has left is a beauty that seems to lie in a music beyond the notes he plays.

The film follows Francis and his relationship with Dale, whom he comes to watch over. A ferrety little man with a job as an illustrator and a young daughter, Berangere, he looks after alone, Francis is the fan many of us wish

to be: he has sold his soul to the music, and he gets the chance to confront and humanise his idol. "I want him to live decently," he says of Dale, and he leads and looks out for him as though Turner were a big, shambling child, or even a blind man. The more he glimpses the cruelties of Dale's life, the harder he tries to help. Francis is a nervous symbol of the white fan's guilt over the jazzman's condition. He lights an awful lot of cigarettes.

Dexter Gordon's performance has an element of slyness in it, as though he were sometimes geying his director's sincerity in his material. Sometimes one senses that Dexter knows how close the storyline is to his own life, that he's trying to insert a distance: his handsome, fallen face will twinkle momentarily as he talks with some of the other musicians (a distinguished ensemble – there are parts for Herbie Hancock, Bobby Hutcherson, John McLaughlin, Wayne Shorter and others, and they all play honestly if a little stiffly). Mostly, though, it's a superbly sustained piece of acting. He shows no self-consciousness in speaking lines like "It's strange how the world isn't inside anything", as though such inarticulate wisdom belongs to him. He is touchingly playful, dancing with Berangere like a great shaggy bear, but at her birthday party he puts on a face of blank, immovable sadness that breaks the heart. We later realise that he's thinking of his own daughter.

The mood of the picture is awkward. In trying to show the other side of the jazz myth – the crummy hotel rooms and bad friendships – Tavernier manages to make his story even more romantic and blue. The New York epilogue adds a certain harshness, but Gordon's playing is so helplessly poetic that nothing can dispel the haze of legend he creates. There are some pointless episodes, like the inclusion of a visit from singer Darcy Lee, a thinly disguised Billie Holiday: this movie-biopic touch is all wrong. And as hard as Tavernier tries to relate a jazz experience, it is Francis he warms to, not

Dale. This film almost leaves the saxophonist to his own devices, as though in admission that a white European can only look on at the black American state.

Two hours ten minutes make it a long haul. Paris appears as a city of neat-darkness, full of shabby streets and corridors, and an atmosphere of death lingers around the story. For all that, anyone who listens to jazz must see Dexter Gordon in this movie. It's a fascinating and moving film and a labour of the most intense love.

Richard Cook

(The film opens in London on November 28.)

### FATHER TIME

Directed by Dick Fontaine  
(Central TV)

RESPONDING to a question at the beginning of this programme about how jazz had been affected by the advent of rock in the 60s, Art Blakey asserted: "The highest form of execution on a musical instrument is jazz... jazz never went nowhere – it just got better and better." This passionate conviction and commitment, explaining the enviable standard of musical excellence maintained by the various Messengers bands over 30 years, was documented extremely effectively by this 50-minute film, an appetiser, it is to be hoped, for a re-edited, 90-minute version to be shown in the future.

Following the overall shape of the Camden Jazz Week event at the Shaw Theatre earlier this year (see *Wire* 27), *Father Time* – also the title of Dick Fontaine's forthcoming book about Blakey – skilfully wove together five main strands: the gig itself, with UK artists the Jazz Defektors, IDJ and the Jazz Warriors involved; interviews with ex-Messengers, most eloquent of whom was Bobby Watson; reactions from the UK element to being asked to play with the Master and to his recorded

music; interviews with members of the Messengers involved in the gig; and film of a question-and-answer session at a drum clinic held the same week. The result was a fascinating and often moving tribute to the power of both man and music.

Dizzy Gillespie and Walter Davis Jr discussed Blakey's powerhouse effect on his sidemen; Donald Harrison and Terence Blanchard described the galvanising effect Blakey had had on their playing, the trumpeter referring to his time with the Messengers as "a period of my life you can't put a price-tag on". Benny Golson and Curtis Fuller chuckled over Blakey's constant urging of them to play to their full capacities by repeated references to Charlie Parker; Wynton Marsalis paid tribute to the leader's faith in his sidemen, even when they were not playing particularly well: "He gave me a chance to be that sad and still play consistent."

There was film of the dance-floor popularity of Blakey's music, intercut with footage of the jazz dancing on stage at the gig; there was an intriguing glimpse of Blakey rehearsing the bass and cowbell introduction to "A Night In Tunisia", actually playing the required bass figure on his side-drums. Courtney Pine and Gail Thompson were engagingly modest about the honour of playing with the Messengers and Colin Graham got right to the heart of the matter, the theme of this film: "We're now the extended fingers of the Messengers... we've got to do something ourselves and touch other people." As the man himself said: "Someone has to keep this going because this is the music from my culture, good, bad or indifferent."

Although it's still difficult to be convinced that the current vogue for dancing to soul-jazz and hard bop constitutes that elusive phenomenon "the jazz revival", this excellent film did provide much heartening evidence that, as Blakey said: "Kids in the UK are really on it and they're going to take it on."

Chris Parker



Round Midnight

## BOOKS

### OUR READERS SWOT UP ON HIPNESS AND NAT COLE

#### THE HIP – Hipsters, Jazz and the Beat Generation

by Roy Carr, Brian Case and Fred Dellari  
(Faber & Faber £9.95)

IT IS NOW OVER a quarter of a century since Norman Mailer's essay, *The White Negro*, defined the phenomenon of The Hipster. It is doubtful that such a closely reasoned argument would find much of an audience in 1986. This large format volume, with its bite-sized chapters and its galaxy of illustrations, is Hip defined for the times. Well-researched, with slick, perceptive, post-New Journalism prose which gives a nod to the more intelligent music press, it is clearly aimed at an audience not even born at the time Hip originated. The hipsters' indifference is evident in the lack of writing credits for individual chapters and the fact that an index has been dispensed with. Nevertheless it has some authority. Another publishing house might have settled for a coffee-table glossy: Faber appear to require rather more depth.

Hip, generations of fashion copywriters to the contrary, does not come off the peg. Not so much a style as an in-built awareness of style, it renders perceived barriers of age, class and even race meaningless. This gift it with its special cachet. Slim Gaillard and Cab Calloway were Hip when they were sharp young jazzmen and their audiences wore khaki. As venerable living institutions, they remain Hip. Boy George can spend a grand in Boy boutique and never come within a country mile of Hipdom. Eric Burdon kicked out by Uncle Sam or Tom Waits outfitted by Oxfam cannot escape it.

This is the book for those who seek the secrets of such staples of style as the Billy Eckstine soft collar and the Gerry Mulligan haircut. Oddly, though, for a volume which depends so heavily on matters sartorial (and tonorial) it is somewhat promiscuous with the seal of approval. The reader begs to differ on occasion. The young versions of Jack Kerouac, Marlon Brando and Chet Baker are obviously Hip. Kid Creole, on the other hand, is anything but Hip. No one who can inform a mass TV audience that God sent the New York herpes epidemic to convert him from promiscuity to marriage is Hip. Other, equally succinct, epithets come to mind. Those responsible for packaging Sade, for instance, obviously had a Hip, post-Lady Day image in mind and made a pretty good stab at it, only to

topple at the last fence. Getting on to the cover of *Time* on your own terms is Hip: having that cover dog-eared by a teaser for the lead story reading "Going After Gaddafi" is not Hip.

The most entertaining parts of the book are the anecdotes about jazzmen. Lester Young is recalled with universal affection ("sweet man"); Babs Gonzales who "could've been a manic if he'd settled down" irrepressibly hawks his book at every funeral; Mingus comes across as every bit as unpleasant a character off stage as his autobiography revealed him to be; Chet Baker, facing the end of his career as a horn player after losing his teeth to a pusher's heavies, refuses to give up, fighting to regain his embouchure back and to play again. Today, at 58, Chet Baker's face is as lined as any the Dust Bowl and the Depression created in his native Oklahoma and he is commonly acknowledged as the living jazzman backing for legend. On the cover of *The Hip* is a photo of a young man with a horn. With his quiff, loafers, baggy pants and white socks you could see him any Friday night, cutting down Old Compton Street, dark eyes and Redford profile turning the girls' heads. In fact, the picture is of Chet Baker in 1953, cool, timeless, the essence of Hip.

Chris Challis

#### NAT KING COLE: THE MAN AND HIS MUSIC

by James Haskins with Kathleen Benson  
(Robson Books £8.95)

NAT KING COLE's life, and this extremely readable account of it, hinge on two basic contradictions: he was a brilliant, seminal pianist who is known to the vast majority of the music-buying public solely as a velvet-voiced crooner of popular songs; and he was a ground-breaking figure in the civil rights struggle (the first black to have his own TV show) who was castigated, then and sometimes more recently, as at best apologetic and at worst a collaborator with the racist enemy. Working out some way of living with these apparently irreconcilable contradictions was Cole's unenviable task in life and this book, while providing a balanced and well-documented summary of the facts of that life, never loses sight of these two basic issues at its heart.

The musician-Cole's story begins conventionally enough. He was influenced by Earl Hines, stranded in California and scraped

a living wearing a gimmack crown playing at Bob Lewis's Swanee Inn until his small-group jazz style caught on, setting a precedent for the outfits led by Red Callender, Vivien Garry and others. Then, because: "The good old days were good on the ear, but hard on the pocket", he allowed his popular singing style to take over his act.

His early race-oriented experiences were equally unambiguous: on a bus in Chicago a light-skinned black woman, disliking his proximity to her, whispered to him: "You are black and you stink and you can never wash it off." He was not encouraged to sing romantic songs because American society was deeply hostile to the idea of blacks having normal human emotions and especially to the idea of white women being affected by them. Billy Eckstine and Cole both broke through this barrier, but to maintain his crossover audience Cole had to suppress his indignation at the many humiliations involved: neighbours writing "Nigger Heaven" on a board outside his house in a "white" area; sponsors being unwilling to back his TV show, ostensibly because it couldn't be shown in the South; teeducks in Birmingham physically attacking him on stage.

He maintained, outwardly at least, equanimity in the face of all the criticisms directed at both his musical and racial attitudes, but he does seem to have been deeply hurt by them. It is deceptively easy (and this book avoids the temptation admirably) to see his second wife, Maria, as the instigator of Cole's problems in both these areas. She encouraged him not only to see himself as a star attraction and to view his fellow musicians as hired help – in one instance he actually acceded to the wishes of his English tour manager that his band should travel and board separately from him – but also to adopt more "sophisticated" ways of behaving and speaking (at one point she reportedly referred to his mother as a "baboon").

The truth, however, as Haskins points out, is more subtle and complex: "... he was a professional entertainer, not a professional Negro" whose usual response to criticism was to say: "The first thing I'm fighting for is individualism." The fact that his fight was inconclusive, that he sacrificed himself in the struggle, is no obstruction to feeling, as a reader finishing this sensitive study, great admiration and affection for the man.

Chris Parker



## WAYS TO PLAY

OWEN BRYCE ON JAZZ HARMONY.



THERE IS ON THE MARKET no dearth of books on the teaching of Jazz. My own view is that there are far too many. It's as though any musicians of note feel they have the ability (and probably need the money) to put across some of the theories behind their own playing, theories learned from teacher, college, or music academy, or some way as a result of many years of

times developed the hard way of playing jazz, often in only one style.

What is certain is that all books start at a much too high level, one which assumes harmonic knowledge and also an unusually high degree of technical proficiency.

Whenever I enter a music shop I pick up one or two such books and am quite often almost out of my depth by the time I open the book, usually at random somewhere near the beginning. One such recent publication I found musically unreadable well before the centre pages. Does one really have to be able to divide the beat into eleven notes and play them at double tempo to get past the third lesson? One would assume so for that is just the type of exercise in so many of these publications. Is the budding improviser ever going to get a natural free-flowing melodic ability while analysing microscopic divisions of the bars and the beats?

A knowledge of harmony is in my opinion essential, but I nifty-try to find any work of this nature which gets down to the nitty-gritty of learning to recognise straightforward simple triads, major or minor. And I cannot recall any book which attempts to teach the identification of major, minor or seventh chords. Yet it seems to me that the ability to be able to hear these changes is just about the most important ingredient in playing unfamiliar tunes where the chord sequence is either unknown or unavailable to the performer.

Some years ago a student came to me for tuition after having put aside his instrument for two complete years after just one lesson with a 'Jazz' teacher, who frightened him to death during the first thirty minutes with extended chords and the Roman Numeral system; a very useful device but not when you're at the stage of just about being able to play the scale and chord of C major. It was only a recommendation from an existing pupil that finally forced him out of early musical retirement, and I'm pleased to report that he went on to do very well.

And just what does the beginner make of a publication, this time by one of America's top pianists, which says on page one "Let's take a basic Blues sequence", the first chord being a minor seventh with a flattened ninth on top? I know what that did to another prospective student. He failed to turn to page two and has since gone on blindly playing traditional things in B flat and F, and even then probably getting them wrong.

I contend that it is essential in the beginning to be able to distinguish between a major chord, a minor chord and a dominant seventh chord. These are the three basic sounds in music, all others being developments, extensions, additions or call them what you will. But to be able to play a chord of the minor seventh and to include the flattened ninth and not know those three sounds makes rubbish of the very essence of music.

So LET'S START AT THE beginning, the real beginning: the three main types of chords, major, minor and dominant sevenths. The major chord is simply the first, third and fifth note of the scale. Play it, in any key you choose, and hear its

full, complete, finished sound, mellow in some keys, bright in others, smooth in still others. Then flatten the third note and hear the difference. A melancholy feeling has come in. Play the major and the minor alternately, by lowering and returning the third note and learn first to hear the difference and then to distinguish it.

Get a friend to play them in different keys on the piano or the guitar, and in different registers and using different inversions, or voicings; sometimes close tight together, sometimes far apart and open, sometimes very full with most of the notes doubled, sometimes thinly and well spread out. But learn to hear that however voiced or wherever played they have the major or minor sound. Beware when doing this not to play the third note of the scale in each case too far down the instrument.

Then play the major triad but add a flattened seventh to it . . . B flat in the key of C. You now have a dominant seventh chord, in jazz named C7th but in classical music more correctly, but rather heavily-handedly "the dominant seventh of the key of F". More correctly, because that description tells you what it does, what the purpose of a seventh chord is — which is to lead to a new key, a new sound.

Play a seventh chord and feel that it wants to move somewhere else, feel that it is unfinished, unresolved. Then once you get that feeling find out where it wants to go. Well, we've said it haven't we? C7th wants to move to F. And F7th wants to go to B flat, and B flat wants to move to E flat. Get it? Each time it wants to go one key flatter. One flat wants to go to two flats and so on.

Most sounds in music want to get flatter. Even without the seventh on top of a C chord the key of C wants to move to the key of F. Listen to hymn tunes, marching tunes, nursery rhymes, the simplest of popular tunes. You'll so often hear that chord of C followed by F.

How do we apply that to jazz music? The way sounds in music want to move applies in just the same way to jazz. It is not surprising that the first move in a twelve-bar blues in C is to the chord of F. We can help it get there by using the dominant seventh chord in the bar before the change. C7th for me and not C minor 7th with a flattened ninth on top, as Horace Silver would have us believe.

When you can clearly hear the difference between a major, a minor and a dominant seventh learn the chord cycle. You can learn it several ways . . . purely parrot fashion, by thinking of the next flatter key round the cycle, or by taking the root note up a fourth. A leads to D, D leads to G, G leads to C. By playing around with the chords you'll eventually go automatically from one to the other without even being conscious of the actual name of the individual chords. That way comes musical freedom and never by mathematically or mechanically being aware at all times of the details of the changes. It's probably the nearest most of us will get to the process by which geniuses play.

At this stage you need to play with other musicians because

listening to what others are doing, hearing the chords beneath and around you is vitally essential as early as possible. Don't wait until you're brilliant on improvisation before starting to play jazz. Technical advancement, harmonic improvement, and the playing of jazz should occur at the same time.





## CHICO FREEMAN

## THE PIED PIPER

(Blackhawk BKH 50801-1)

Recorded: New York, 9 April 1984.

*The Pied Piper, The Rose Tattoo, Blues On The Border, Monk 2000, Softly As In A Morning Sunrise, Amer Soku Dae.*

Freeman (ss, sn, as, ts, bs, bcl, f, bcl), John Purcell (ss, bs, ob, f, pcc), Kenny Kirkland (p-1), Mark Thompson (p-2), Cecil McBee (b), Elvin Jones (d)

## WYNTON MARSALIS

## J MOOD

(CBS 57068)

Recorded: New York, 17-20 December 1985.

*J Mood, Presence That Latent Breeze, Intense Asylum, Share's Domain, Melodique, After, March Later.*

Marsalis (s), Marcus Roberts (p), Robert Hurst (b), Jeff Watts (d).

## DAVID MURRAY

## CHILDREN

(Black Saint BSR 0089)

Recorded: New York, 2 October &amp; 15 November 1984.

*Dandel-Mango, Death, All The Things You Are, Tenues.*

Murray (ss, bcl), James Blood Ulmer (g), Don Pullen (p), Leonie Plaxico (b), Marvin Smith (d).

WE ACCEPT THAT JAZZ isn't about 'leaders' any more. But vernacular develops around a few names that suggests that the old competitive streak still sticks in the listener's mind. Things like: "Have you heard the new Wynton?" The definite article abides. A few leaders always emerge, no matter how cooperative the music gets.

Freeman, Marsalis and Murray might be today's three leaders, if you count tradition as the major battleground. Each has an imperious

authority, remarkable technical command, terrific musical appetite and the charisma that lets kings go forth. None of them is playing simple music. Marsalis is cool enough to frost over the casual audience, Freeman's complex personality, one foot in the mystic and the other on hard (bop) ground, glitters with ambiguity. Murray is the most extreme of the three, a distraught shaman voice that talks madly through the saxophone, yet in some ways he's the most respectful when it comes to the music's origins. Each of these three fine records spears away in a different direction.

Wynton Marsalis sheds a little more of his scholar's garb on *J Mood*. Wynton's nobility has been appotent since his days with Blakely, but each solo record presents a master's advance that is beginning to seem fearsome. He began as a refined player and his series of albums for Columbia have taken refinement to its plausible limits. They've also got harder and brighter and more lucid as they've gone on. *Black Code* sounded like the state of the Marsalis art, with its dense and tense charts and suave, bleak messages. *J Mood*, with a largely new band and Marsalis himself as the sole front line, slows that music down and opens a luxuriant nervous system.

This might be the least popular of Wynton's records because it's the least demonstrative. The tempos are languid, the exposition unhurried. At some points there seems to be a subtle game in progress, the rite track, a sort of unearthly blues, has the trumpeter palming off what might, in another world, be blues clichés, but his variety of phrase lengths and precision of tone let nothing hackneyed come

out. Everywhere there is elegance, fineness of line, microscopic inner detail. Even the slightly faster tempos of "Skain's Domain" and "Insane Asylum" provoke no haste. "After" and "Asylum" inspire thematic improvising of such complexity that one is tempted to take the easy option and call them theory lessons.

His team all have the steel purpose that Marsalis loves in his music. Hurst's tone is lustrous; Watts, considering that he's playing a slow time for most of the session, is superbly inventive at finding sharp emphases without intruding. "Much Later" is their one piece of fun, trumpet, piano and drums skittishly circling round and round over fast walking bass. This is probably Wynton's best record. Understated, without relaxing for a moment.

*The Pied Piper* is the most fun of the three. For a musician whose best work is as tough and unforgiving as any of the post-Coltrane tenors, there's a ray of beaming good humour in Chico Freeman that can surprise. Murray or Marsalis would never frolic the way he can. His best records have usually been the plainest showcases for his huge tone and booming address, like *Spirit Sessies* and *The Outside Within*; when he tries to get too eclectic it breaks up the force of the music. But the variety of *The Pied Piper* is engaging.

The title tune is a witty fantasy for sax sections, with Chico and Purcell overdudding themselves into Ellington chorales, though some of the scoring is more like Gil Evans (Purcell's presence seems to be confined to this track and "Monk 2000"). "The Rose Tartan" is an ingenious ballad choice, hefty on the changes and tranquil at the melody's heart; "Morning Sunrise" is the big tenor blow-out, though Kirkland's solo lets the heat recede. I prefer Thompson, who plays a pithy, hammer-on solo in "Piper" and contributes "Monk 2000", a clever riff setting.

It's again a little too various. "Blues On The Bottom", for instance, is an infectious vamp but the music sounds too pieced-together. I'd still rather hear Chico blowing his ass off than playing for the band. But it's a marvellous band, with McBee and Jones absolutely on it. The future Freeman looks to be a diverse, almost kaleidoscopic music, and he's got the heart to carry it through.

If I think that David Murray is the most significant musician of the three, it's because his music is such a total embodiment of tradition marching into a wide-open future. He is in the revered line of great-hearted tenormen and he composes themes soaked in big band lyricism; but he remains fascinated by the rawness of Albert Ayler and the jostling, lurching cadences of free saxophone. Murray's magic is to take that wildness and impose a clear-headed and uncontracting form on it.

*Children* is another set that aims to show

many different paces, and this one works on every track. Ulmer and Pullen appear on one tune each. "David-Mingus" has guitarist and renoman scratching and tearing over a coarse, bumping funk bottom, and though it's objectively diffuse this is a very exciting thrash. "Death" is an appropriately sombre dirge for bass clarinet which leaves no doubt that Murray has no contemporary peers on the instrument. His confidence in the guttural low register and the squalling octave leaps project a dark poetry that's the reverse of David's coin.

Wynton Marsalis



"All The Things You Are" begins as one of the slow atmospheric trails that Murray used to deal in all the time, but moves into a bawling, colossal work-out with Pullen's tenor-fisted cascades. "Tension" is a virtuoso tenor bombardment, the sort that David uncorks when he's really flaming, and though it's basically a sax-drum dialogue there's no particular echo of Trane and Elvin. Murray's phrases are heretically diverse, inside and outside the saxophone's proper range; there is no rhetoric.

Who's to choose? Three records by three masters.

Richard Cook

#### JABBO SMITH & HIS RHYTHM ACES SWEET'N'LOW DOWN

(Affinity AFS 1029)  
Recorded: (a) New York, 3/11/27 and Chicago, six sessions between 29/1/29 & 4/4/29.  
*Sweet And Low Down, Jazz Battle, Little Willie Blues, Sleepy Time Blues, Take Your Time, What More Can A Poor Fellow Do? (a); Take Me To The River, Black And Tan Fantasy (a); Let's Get Together, San Jose Stomp; Mashed Potato Blues; Deane Street Strut, Tall Timo Get Better, Ace Of Rhythm.*  
Jabbo Smith (cl, vc); Omer Simeon (cl); Willard Brown (cl, ar); Cassius Simpson, William Barber, Keith Anderson (p); Ike Robinson (b); Lawson Buford, Hayes Alvis (tu); (collective personnel) and (a) Duke Ellington & His Orchestra.

WRITING ABOUT THE MUSIC of Sidney Bechet in *Wire* 24 Richard Cook just about hit the nail on the head with regard to music such as this: "We can toss around motives like history, roots and the like, but the only worthwhile

criterion for new ears for old jazz is whether it's really (really) going to sound good." Richard's conclusion was that Sidney "always sounds good", and while such an emphatic thumbs up may not be as warranted in the case of Jabbo Smith, there are still enough great things going down here to justify this "old jazz" getting across to at least some "new ears".

Perhaps the timelessness of Louis Armstrong's Hot Fives and Sevens plays some part in this music's continuing vitality, for if any one trumpeter ever absorbed Armstrong's dazzling technique to any kind of profitable end it was Smith. At times his solos veer dangerously close to outright imitation; at the beginning of "Take Me To The River" for example the short burst of rising accapella sixteenth notes that leads into a stream of legato phrasing sounds suspiciously similar to the technique Armstrong used on "West End Blues" a year earlier. But for the most part the sheer dramatic bravado and daring of his playing overcomes any unease at the closeness of the two sounds. On the title track he duets with Simeon playing a tightly muted horn and spraying rapid fire notes with a precision and abandon that even Armstrong would have been hard pressed to match. Much the same thing happens on the uptempo "Jazz Battle", only this time he plays on, the clearer note definition making the apparent ease of execution all the more astonishing. "Sleepy Time Blues" is the opposite end of the spectrum, a graceful paring down of the soul that without the means of sentiment still conjures up an affecting sorrow.

That Smith was able to burn so deeply on these dates is due in no small way to the skill of his sidemen. Simeon's clarinet is a delightful foil, calm and debonair next to the leader's heated outpourings, and the rhythm players provide a base that moves in precisely measured strides but with none of the sluggishness that characterised so many rhythm sections of the period.

Tony Harrington

#### COLEMAN HAWKINS THE GENIUS OF

(Verve 825 673-1)  
Recorded: Los Angeles, 16 October 1957.  
*I'll Never Be The Same, You're Blame, I Wished On The Moon, How Long Has This Been Going On, Like Someone In Love, My Melancholy Baby, Ill Wind, In A Mellowood, There's No You, The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise, Somebody Loves Me, Blues For Real.*  
Coleman Hawkins (tr); Oscar Peterson (p) Ray Brown (b); Herb Ellis (g); Alvin Seidler (d).

BY 1957 HAWKINS must have appeared on so many sessions such as this, the lone horn hitched up to an available rhythm team for a programme of some well-thumbed standards and the obligatory 'original' blues, that given

the prodigious technique he had at his disposal the temptation simply to coast through the date must have been one that was hard to resist. As it is there is barely a moment when he shows any discernible indifference to changes he must have known inside out or inclination to fall back on the established riffing techniques that are endemic to most sessions of such a hacked-together nature.

The flamboyant cocktail decoration that was Peterson's trademark was probably the least conducive to environments for a player with as volatile a nature as Hawk. Yet despite the lack of urgency a Tommy Flanagan or Teddy Wilson may have provided, the tenorist simply brushes aside the underlying chintz and lace to produce some sublime personal moments. "I'll Never Be The Same" for example is a supple stream of ideas, each one peeling off to reveal the next in a seamless flow, while the brisk "The World Is Waiting For A Sunrise" piles phrases one on top of the other with a bopper's precision and never misses a step. There's a dilution of sorts with the rich strident roll of the tenor sounding clumsily incongruous over the urbane movement of the rhythm section on "In A Mellotone", but it's hard to fault the pristine structures of "There's No You" and "Like Someone In Love" where a kind of empathy is reached, Hawkins responding with two of his most sumptuous declarations.

In fact the tenorist's sheer stamina here is exhilarating. He is up and blowing right from the off and doesn't let up for a minute. No one else ventures out into solo space and the sideline interest is minimal; Peterson's occasional rhapsodic grotesqueries are spaced out sufficiently enough not to cause too much grief while Brown, Ellis and Stoller simply provide an adequate momentum, intruding no further into proceedings than that.

Tony Harrington

#### TONY SCOTT SUNG HEROES

(Sunnyside SSC1015)  
Recorded: New York City, 28/29 October 1959.  
For Stefan Wolpe; Israel.  
Scott (cl), Bill Evans (p).  
Misery, Requiem For Hot Lips Page, Blue For An African Friend.  
Scott LaFaro (b); Paul Motian (d) added.  
Remembrance Of Art Tatum.  
Scott plays p, Evans absent.  
Portrait of Anne Frank.  
Scott plays cl, b; LaFaro, Motian absent.  
Memory Of My Father.  
Scott plays g.  
Lament For Mametete.  
Scott (cl), Juan Sastre (g).

IT IS HARD to understand this material not – according to discographical friends – having been issued before. Here is the best clarinet playing that I have ever heard from Scott, admittedly all at slow tempos. There are two

duets with Evans and three tracks on which he sits in with what was then the Bill Evans Trio, the group that was soon to make the classic *Portrait In Jazz* (Riverside OJC088). These five pieces are the best, though each track is dedicated to a notable person. "Misery", for Billie Holiday, and "Requiem" are particularly beautiful, and the latter includes a long passage for just clarinet and bass.

"Portrait" is multi-tracked and conveys an impression of solitude and desolation that is such as to link up with the frozen world of Serge Chaloff's "Easy Street". The abrupt changes of perspective, with the baritone saxophone heard now far off, now close up, are quite disturbing. If it is Scott at the keyboard on "Remembrance" it has to be said that he plays very respectable piano indeed. The most exploratory, interesting and longest piece is the one for Stefan Wolpe (1902–72), the composer with whom a number of jazzmen including George Russell studied and whom Charlie Parker wanted to write a piece for him. Scott's guitar work is unremarkable, and "Lament" is a rather pointless imitation of bullfight music. "Israel" is not the famous John Carisi modal blues, for all the themes on this recommended LP are Scott's own.

Max Harrison

#### DIAMANDA GALAS THE DIVINE PUNISHMENT (Mute STUMM 27)

Recorded: London/San Francisco, 1986.  
Deliver Me From Mine Enemies; Free Among The Dead.  
Galas (v).



THERE ARE OTHERS using these kinds of techniques of presentation to render bibbles opaque: Coil and Lydia Lunch redefining defilement, '93' Current '93' layering choirs of plainsong to hymn Christ and AntiChrist as one, Test Department finding marriage between respect and aesthetic alienations, even the Menemist Orchestra, enfolding and crushing their own and other music in the cruel press of their sound. But Galas is the Scream Queen, as she corals shriek into song and uncovers the raw cry in the aria: her

performance drives her voice to its ragged edge, rubs it electronically into pervasive surface crackle, dubs it into massed howls.

They share a technology that refuses to bow to time (the overduh), that focuses on confusing the dialectic (call and response, if you like, swapped or tangled in edit): if Galas seems to be offering vocal espousal of the most violent Moral Majority attacks on a beleaguered modern community, the form the espousal takes, the full resonance of alienation brought out in the excessive multiplexed scrawl of her voice, must call against and unpin the message carried. The moral order that seeks to isolate (and so destroy) that part of us under the direct threat of AIDS is quoted savagely, openly, allowed full unchallenged scriptural flow. And the thick weight of the sound, the erotic pull of a human song-form away from the particular words employed, throws the attempt at separation into question.

The pure, the defiled: categories that can stand only in an extreme order of patriarchal symbolism. In such a state, Galas the cartoon demonic cannot be anything but heretic. If "evil" or "filth" are being caught up round one as bold cloaks of identity (and looking good!), if codes of behaviour are being so ruthlessly scrambled, ironised, divested, almost, of the flesh of the meaning, then this one-woman opera is the living embodiment of the difficult unity of both sides of the brutal debate, a single pin-point humanised smash of the tenets of censure and defiance, of the dance of presence and loss. No one comes through such a sound unchanged. We are all under threat here (*Phew* – Ed).

Mark Sinker

#### DICK WELLSTOOD LIVE AT THE CAFÉ DES COPAINS (Unisson DDA1003)

Recorded: Café des Copains, Toronto, 29 May 1985.  
Mongrel, Sweet Lorraine, Shalome Bey, St James Infirmary, What's New? Jangle Bells, Rubber Duckie, Sassy Morning Blues, Old Folks, Viper's Drag, The Entertainer, Happy Feet.  
Wellstood (p).

BACK IN THE 1970s I had several exchanges of letters with Wellstood that I brought to an end with a letter which included various Biblical quotations. That scared the daylight out of him, naturally, and I never heard from him again. Yet he bounced back, and I last saw him in Whitney Balliett's *Jelly Roll, Jabbo And Fat* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1983), where he said he was learning German so he could read Nietzsche, "who makes me laugh" (page 104). Obviously anyone who plays James P. Johnson and laughs at Nietzsche deserves the sympathetic consideration of all civilised men, and of all civilised women, for all I know.

Tempting though it is to divert you with extracts from Balliett's lurid "description" of Wellstood's style, I will say instead that collectively the devices of stride piano make up as good a method as most of getting jazz out of the instrument. After all, they provided the basis of Tatum's work and a beginning for Monk. Most pieces will submit to the stride treatment – well, perhaps not Ayler's "Ghosts" – and Wellstood proves it with convincing transformations of what seems like defiantly anti-jazz material such as "Jingle Bells". Improbable pieces like "Moonglow" and "Shoe Shine" respond excellently, too, and this pianist, long steeped in the idiom, makes it all sound completely natural.

Wellstood heightens variety through switches of tempo, usually making these changes smoothly. "St James Infirmary" is particularly interesting, as is "What's New?" (alias "I'm Free"). The latter makes me wonder if he had Garner's 1947 "Frankie And Johnny" (Spotlite SPJ 129) at the back of his mind. Noteworthy departures are made in "The Entertainer" (departures from Joplin are often welcome) and in "Viper's Drag", even if the momentarily wanders into "The Hall Of The Mountain King" during the latter. There is a brief eruption of "Blues In The Night" on the last track also, a happy feat.

The bossman at the Café des Copains is to be commended for knowing how to keep the audience quiet, but if they are so fond of pianists at his place why does he not get a better instrument? The recording, however, is superlative. If I end with the useless comment that the "Snowy Morning" included here is not as "good" as James P's version (for Asch, 1942) it is only to annoy Wellstood himself. Like most of these jazz artists, he pretends never to read his reviews while actually reading little else. Apart from Nietzsche.

Max Harrison

#### TOSHINORI KONDO & IMA KONTON

(Epic EPC 57075)

Recorded: Tokyo, no date.

*Samboru: Yano, Y. U.; Saebudvito; Yoyoy; Gao.*

Kondo (tr); Haruo Togashi (ky); Friccio (g, b); Taro Saku (b); Hideo Yamaki (d); plus Kam Duk-Soo (perc); Bill Laswell (b).

HOWEVER MUCH HE seems ready to embrace all the prickly possibilities that hi-tech has, a player like Toshinori Kondo always sounds like he's squirming inside the electric fence. This is the first "western" LP for Kondo's band IMA. Produced by Bill Laswell, it sits the trumpeter against a confectioned backdrop of electronic tracks that range from a soft tick to a juggernaut crash. Polyrhythmic rolls seem to slide from channel to channel, along with plenty of keyboard chittering, some attractive chord changes (in "Y.U."). . . all the finely-

organised debris that we expect from a Laswell soundscape, in fact.

Against this yammering regimentation is Kondo's trumpet. If players like Bowie and Charig are vocalised, then Kondo talks in tongues even they haven't found out yet. He can play in the alien ballad style of Miles in his *Big Fun* period – and this music probably isn't so far off what Davis was after back then – but he's also travelling much further out than that. Barks, gurgles, clicks and lots of other highly adjectival stuff make up the nerves of his system.



Thing is, where this can be devastating, manically energetic sound in an acoustic context, with all IMA's hardware at work Kondo sounds like another synthetic gnat buzzing through the ether of the studio. Like Herbie Hancock, or Beresford and Toop, Kondo's enthusiasms for the challenge of using the studio can outpace his capacity for making it work. If he has a weakness as an improviser, it's that he tends not to know when to stop; paradoxically, he's not sure how to get started here. All he has is a trumpet, and everybody else in this band can do much noisier.

Actually, on its own terms this is a brisk, entertaining set. Laswell has given the band a hard, accessible edge without draining off their stylish mix-ups. But you keep waiting for some sort of explosion, some kind of all-out madness from Kondo to set matters alight, and it never quite arrives.

Richard Cook

#### PETER DICKINSON

##### RAGS, BLUES AND PARODIES

(Conifer CFRA 134)

Recorded: Rosalyn Chapel, Hampstead, 9 December 1985.

*Sheva's Tunes: an anthology, Quartet Rag.*

*Extraneous tunes: a non-cycle in poems by Gregory Corso; Blue Rag, Wild Rag Rag, A Rag, Red Rag, Concerto Rag, So We'll Go No More A-Roving, Hymn-Tune Rag, Four Blues.*

Merel Dickinson (mezzo-soprano); Peter Dickinson (p).

SOMEONE USED TO say of Monk that everything he did, combing his hair, eating toast, walking around, was music. It's true of a select few. Don Cherry, Max Roach, a handful.

Peter Dickinson is another. He's a prescription for any who still believe that 'serious' music is necessarily solemn.

Dickinson, once a professor at Keele (and what a teacher he must have been), has an incredibly fertile musical mind, and what is rarer, a genuine sense of humour. It took him and his sister Meriel, a superb mezzo, to reconcile me to Satie.

Here they've just about got me to like Steve Smith and Gregory Corso, two poets I've always thought ridiculously over-rated (*No! – Beat Ed*). The best of the album, though, is elsewhere. Dickinson is a great listener and a great synthesiser. Playing over Ravel's *Valses Nobles Et Sentimentales* he was struck by a passage in No 1. Critics like to locate the blues in Ravel; Dickinson, without embarrassment, took them out and made them his own. Here he makes a blues from nine bars of the original and melds the new tune to Lord Byron's poem "So We'll Go No More A-Roving".

The "Concerto Rag" is a solo version of a theme from Dickinson's Piano Concerto (recently played at the Proms and recorded by EMI – EL 27 04391) – along with the Organ Concerto) where it's played on an ordinary upright joanna in among the orchestra. The "Four Blues" merit comparison with Virgil Thompson's equally unironic forays into tango.

To top it all, there's a version – sung by Meriel Dickinson – of Burns's "My Love Is Like A Red, Red Rose" which along with "Ae Fond Kiss" and even in this English version is still the most beautiful love song. Ever.

Great stuff, wherever your tastes run. Cures anything from post-viral depression to insistent melancholia.

Brian Morton

#### TOMMY FLANAGAN TRIO IN STOCKHOLM 1957

(Dragon DRLP 87)

Recorded: Stockholm, 15 August 1957.

*Blues: "At Camerillo, Chelsea Bridge, Edgipos; Dalarna (take 3); Vindendi, Willow Wag For Me (take 2); Blues Up, Skat Brothers, Little Rag, Dalarna (take 2); Vindendi (take 2); Willow Wag For Me (take 1). Tommy Flanagan (p), Wilbur Little (b), Elvin Jones (d).*

HARD-BOP PIANO trios are often an unappetising prospect. Bop vocabulary, so ideally suited to the dramatic, dynamically wide-ranging properties of the horn, is often shrivelled to nothing in the hands of an ordinary pianist, the demanding unsentimentality of the style frequently reducing the musician to clattered imitations of Bud Powell, grey and flair-less, as natural as concrete. But some are born to it.

Sonny Clark's Blue Note trios are definitive explorations of this most caustic of sub-genres, his weirdly burbling swing and natural

economy actually moving the music a step outside Powell's manic world and settling it down in a place that mortals might inhabit. With Horace Silver and Flanagan (among few others), Clark showed that you could use key elements of Powell's style and yet not sound like a smudgy carbon copy.

As one Jones (Philly Joe) ignited Clark, so does Elvin put the heat beneath Flanagan here. Using brushes throughout, this is not the seven-league-lop Elvin archetype but a tightly whirling drummer (the vorpal blade went snicker-snack and so on) probing the pianist's melodic/harmonic structures for every last scrap of rhythmic emphasis.

Flanagan himself is very uncomplicated. What he lacks in Clark/Silver-like charm, he makes up for with unfussy directness. Even when slipping and sliding through a smoky intro to "Willow Weep For Me", his attack keeps the theme grittily free of sleazy cliché so that the explosion into double-time improvisation, when it comes, remains coherent and unbombastic. Splendid stuff.

Not the kind of thing to be played at your funeral – its view of the world is a trifle comfortless, its affirmation of life too chastening – but a shot of this in the morning and last thing at night will prolong your natural span considerably and add inches to your sense of well-being. My kind of exercise.

Nick Coleman

## BUDDY DE FRANCO GROOVIN'

(Hep 2030)

Recorded: London, 24 October 1964.

*Whispering/Groovin' High, I Got A Right To Sing The Blues, Manhattan, Goodbye Just Friends, Angels Camp, Dark Island, Prelude To A Kiss, I Got Rhythm!*

*Anthology.*

De Franco (cl), Martin Taylor (g), Alex Shaw (p);

Ronnie Rae (b); Clark Tracey (d).

THE DEVELOPING hegemony of the saxophone has led to the decline of the clarinet as a major voice in jazz, to the point where Buddy de Franco (even his name seems to come from a different era) remains virtually its only significant full-time practitioner. He's been at it a long time, as far as one can tell leaving the saxophone behind when he left Tommy Dorsey's band in 1946. He has now attained the kind of fluent virtuosity that had it been developed on a more fashionable instrument by now would have ascribed 'legendary' status to him. Well, you can't win 'em all.

With such a state of affairs, you take the chances that present themselves, and this record offers a clear view of de Franco's comprehensive artistry. He even manages to breathe some life into Gordon Jenkins's "Goodbye", which has always seemed to me about the dearest song ever written. Elsewhere, partnered by the excellent Martin

Taylor, there is clean-lined, finely detailed work. Arguably the album would have been even better had the opening and closing tracks, which run standard songs and their related bebop lines together, been allowed to suffuse the programme more completely, but as it is there is little to complain about. The local (well, relatively) rhythm section is made up of young musicians who play with skill and enthusiasm, renewing musical forms developed decades ago. While they are by no means direct descendants of this country's New Orleans revivalists – and probably wouldn't care to be characterised as such – there are some similarities, insofar as this attitude reflects a strong sense of conservatism, rather than mere conservatism, that is worthy of respect.

Jack Cooke

## SHORTY ROGERS AND HIS GIANTS GERRY MULLIGAN TENTETTE MODERN SOUNDS

(Affinity AEF 158)

Recorded: Los Angeles, 8 October 1951.

*Pops, Dads, Four Mothers, Over The Rainbow, Apropos, Sam And The Lady.*

Rogers (d), John Gens (tr), Gene Englund (tn), Art Pepper (as), Jimmy Guiffre (ts), Hampton Hawes (p), Don Bagley (b), Shelly Manne (d).

Recorded: Los Angeles, 31 January 1953

*Wanted Walks A Ballad, Walking Blues, Rocker, Taking A Chance On Love, Flash, Swish, Outie, Chet Baker, Pete Candale (tr), Bob Enewolden (vb), John Gens (tr), Ray Siegel (tn), Bud Shank (as), Don Davidson, Gerry Mulligan (bs), Joe Mondragon (b), Chico Hamilton or Larry Bunker (d).*



MODERN SOUNDS

THIS IS GREAT music we should never be tired of. I wrote about Mulligan's Tentette a few months ago, so just to mention that their tracks sound as good a few months later as they did 33 years ago.

The Rogers sides, cut close to the start of West Coast cool, are a workshop of precocity. The unique sound of the ensemble comes from the use of french horn and tenor horn and the absence of trombone and baritone sax: the middle registers are alive with strange colours, and the approach lends a rare tone to ensembles that are written inside out. The thinness of

tinny suits the trackiness of Shorty's tunes, and when a soloist kicks his way out of the group you don't care if he doesn't exactly sound Giant. Guiffre is competent on tenor, Rogers mercurial, Hawes dancing, and Art Pepper is Pepper. His "Over The Rainbow" comes on as the bsg ballad feature – like, say, Giza doing "Early Autumn" with Woody Herman – but scaled down to a pocket-sized wistfulness.

The tune you won't escape is "Apropos", a mercilessly swinging line which pre-empted what the Giants would do on the superb *Cool And Crazy* sessions a couple of years later. These are period sounds now but they seem as modern as most of what's going down today.

Richard Cook

## CLASSIE BALLOU ALL NIGHT MAN (Krazy Kat KK 800)

Recorded: Church Point, Louisiana, 1981-84.

*Zydeco Rock'n'roll, Pook Wailz, All Night Man, Classic's Shuffle, Swamp Cabbage Blues, Cat St Bone, Mamas W'oman, Church Point Special, Highlight Of My Life, Joe Pate Got Caught, Jubilee Woman, May Mad.*

Ballou (g, bc), Preston Frank (acc) with various accompanists

A LOCAL HERO in Texas and Louisiana in the 60s, forgotten in the 70s and now back on the scene in the mid-80s – that's a capsule history of singer/guitarist Classic Ballou. This LP, his recording resurgence after some 15 years' absence from the studios, stems from Lee Lavergne's Lanor label, one of the perennial flag-wavers for R & B and zydeco in South Louisiana.

Ballou cites Xavier Cugat among his influences as well as the more usual regional and national R & B stars, and thus it's no surprise that a touch of the Latin creeps into his rhythm section. Indeed, "All Night Man" is a very varied set from an area not noted for its musical eclecticism. "Mexican Woman" is pure Latin, vaguely recalling "Rum & Coca Cola", "Classic's Shuffle" recalls Albert Collins with undertones of Booker T. & The MGs; "All Night Man" is a doomy slab of swamp-blues, "Church Point Special" a zydeco two-step, while "Swamp Cabbage Blues" is a remarkable number, much more highly produced than most Louisiana music, and has an aura of dub mixed with "Baby Please Don't Go".

Okay, so let's hear it for Mr Versatility. Classic Ballou sings amiably enough, putting his deep voice to particularly good use on the slow blues numbers, and plays crap, clean guitar. But the album as a whole comes over as worthy rather than enjoyable. Maybe this is due to the producer who, in his quest for a carefully-produced sound, hasn't quite captured the sparkle and spontaneity which are essential components of good Louisiana music.

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W I R E W E W O U L D N ' T W E A R A N Y T H I N G E L S E



Maybe it's because the tracks were cut over a period of months with different backing musicians. Maybe it's because some of the songs, such as "May Me!", lack melody and outrun the artist's ideas.

Or maybe the quality of the music, paradoxically, works against it: there's more depth and subtlety here than one would expect on a typical Louisiana LP. It could be that Ballou's classiness emerges only after repeated and careful listening, and that *All Night Man* will be seen in years to come as a landmark recording. Time will tell.

Mike Atherton

#### McCOY TYNER TIME FOR TYNER

(Blue Note BST 84307)

Recorded: New York City, 15 May 1968.  
*African Village, Little Meddler, May Street, I Didn't Know What Time It Was, The Sunny Way, The Fringe On Top, I've Grown Accustomed To Her Face.*  
Tyner (p), Bobby Hutcherson (vib); Herbie Lewis (b); Freddie Washington (dr).

#### JUST FEELIN'

(Palo Alto PA 8083)

Recorded: San Francisco, 1985.  
*Just Feelin', I Didn't Know What Time It Was, Blues For Bass, Berliners, You Don't Know What Love Is; There Is No Greater Love, Manha De Carnaval.*  
Tyner (p), Avery Sharpe (b), Louie Hayes (dr).

THE BRACING AURAL therapy of Tyner's piano is one of the exhilarating experiences in jazz. Focusing on the epicentre of a Tyner solo is like the advent for a well-known brand of cassette; the sheet power of his playing makes you grip the arms of the chair in case you're blown out of the room by emotional force.

The extent to which he has refined his craft is illustrated in particular by the two versions of "I Didn't Know What Time It Was". The first comes from 1968 when Tyner's influence as a pianist was at its height; his clear, ringing open-voiced chords, his preference for fourths and his highly individual way of comping inspired countless pianists including Chick Corea, Joanne Beacock and Onajae Allan Gumbs. In 1968 the technique was in place but not the touch. The percussive, high-tensile attack full of densely layered sound-sheet arpeggios, fast side-slipping runs and those thunderous pedal-points, with Tyner's hands crashing on to the keyboards from shoulder height, were to evolve with increasing definition through the 70s.

And that is essentially the difference between these two albums, the Blue Note craftsmanlike but lacking the dramatic bravura of the Palo Alto. Even so, Tyner is one of those rare birds who has never made an indifferent album, and *Time For Tyner* is marked by the close rapport with vibist Bobby Hutcherson whose shimmering cascades fit perfectly into Tyner's vision. On "African Village" they

achieve an almost incantatory translucence as they repeat the chant-like theme that sways through an ever-thickening harmonic and rhythmic jungle. It's a loss to jazz that the next time these musicians would play together would be at a Paul Masson Festival in the 80s.

Tyner's current working band appears on *Just Feelin'*, Avery Sharpe a talented young player on both Fender and acoustic bass and Louis Hayes, sounding more at home with Tyner than any of the distinguished groups he has propelled in the past. The 1985 "I Didn't Know..." is something of a tour-de-force, opening with a jaunty cake-walking intro that evokes James P. and Fatha, it shifts rapidly into gear with the imperious majesty of Tyner's assault on the changes. But the standout track is Tyner's "Blues For Bass", with its intimidating rolling chords that illustrate the power of his playing. Here is a musician at one with his instrument, and after years of honing his style Tyner has reached a kind of perfection.

Stuart Nicholson

#### DE ZES WINDEN LIVE AT THE BIM AND MORE

(Bibaast 064)

Recorded: "Bimhouse", Amsterdam, 15 May 1986  
*Kempe On 7 Error, D Sharp, Increased Casanova, 56 Beats And More*

Recorded: Eindhoven, 15 May 1986  
*Duke's Little Finger, Louie Hayes, Sweeney's Mood Bill Smith (saxophone), Dries LeDuc (as), Paul Termos (as), John Tchicai (ts); Ad Peijenburg (b), Klaas Heckman (bss).*

THERE HAS BEEN a tendency recently – no more than that, certainly not yet a trend – for saxophonists to get together and do it all for themselves, rejecting any outside musical assistance. Family gatherings, you might say, of Adolphe Sax's children. For this album, most respectable branches of the family, from soprano to bass, have made it. The result is a dense and wide enough sound, though simultaneously something seems to be lacking. This is partly because one is conditioned to listen for other things than just saxophones, so the ear is seeking information which isn't available; this isn't helped by the way in which all the instruments stay within their conventional ranges, with the baritone and bass anchoring the ensemble and constantly hinting at the possibility that they are going to do Kenton's old "Opus In Pastels" next, reinforcing previous conditioning rather than allowing it to be disregarded.

Outside of the purely sonic frame of reference the musical terms adopted here are again relatively conventional for this day and age. There is a lot of spiky modernism on the 'live' tracks, with Tchicai's tenor coming over as the best-organised voice (though "56 Beats"

sounds at times like a rather dull palatium band of the 1940s struggling through "The Carioca" while they're waiting for the drummer to show). The studio tracks are more considered and work better because of the higher level of organisation. With such an instrumentation, probably only by taking such care can its potential be realised. On the other hand how far this music can be polished without becoming merely self-referencing is equally open to question.

Jack Cooke

#### MIKIS THEODORAKIS SONGS OF FREEDOM AND GUITAR PIECES

(CBS CB 321 60313)

*Seven Songs Of Lora, Four Epitaphs For Solo Guitar, Three Songs*  
Maria Farandouri (v), John Williams (gtr)

FORGET NANA MUSSAKA. Maria Farandouri has the authentic Greek singing voice. Since the age of 16, she has been an interpreter of Theodorakis's music and a superb populariser of his political ideas (now very much in abeyance, the battle having in some sense been won).

This music has much in common with flamenco (and is as far from kebab house bouzouki/Mouskouri nonsense as real flamenco is from the Bendomei version). It's passionate, plangent and extremely compelling. Farandouri has a voice with many of Maria Callas's faults and virtues, strong rather than sweet, often too strong, never anything less than assertive.

It's a little hard to separate these pieces from the ideologies and political struggles that helped to inspire them. Even so, they're of more than historical interest and the versions of Garcia Lorca are superb.

John Williams has in recent years fallen squarely into the Palladium/command performance end of the market, to the extent that we occasionally need reminding that as sharp-eared and hard to please as Yehudi Menuhin once said of him that he was the most gifted instrumentalist he had ever heard, on any instrument. Theodorakis may not be the most demanding of composers for him, but he's a damned sight worthier of Williams's talents than Sky ever were.

#### GEORGE WALLINGTON JAZZ FOR THE CARRIAGE TRADE

(Original Jazz Classics OJC-1704)

Recorded: New York, 20 January 1956  
*One Delight: Our Love Is Here To Stay, Fuster Diller: Together We Stand, What's New, But George*  
Wallington (p), Phil Woods (as), Donald Byrd (tr), Teddy Kotick (b), Arthur Taylor (dr)

ONE OF THE FIRST JAZZ PIANISTS, GEORGE Wallington formed his style independently of

Bud Powell, and was involved in the bebop movement as early as 1943 as a member of the Dixie Gillespie-Oscar Pettiford group. Like Powell, Wallington had urgency and fire in his playing, an excellent technique but with his own distinctive touch. It is, however, as the composer of "Godchild" that he's now remembered, despite his undoubted ability as a pianist. A leader of his own small groups until the sixties, he left jazz to go into the air-conditioning business with his brothers, where it seems he gave up the piano completely to indulge his spare time in skeet shooting.

This session in many ways illustrates Wallington's gradual loss of interest in jazz. Simple heads open up into blowing territory, and the lukewarm proceedings are only warmed by Phil Woods. Wallington's solo on "Foster Dulles", for example, is no more than a series of amiable noodlings. "Together We Will" is the most interesting track. Donald Byrd finally gets going and both he and Woods combine to produce sections of improvised counterpoint, one of the most under-exploited resources in jazz. For me, Donald Byrd has never been a wholly convincing trumpet player, and this session gives me no reason to revise my opinion. His playing has the fragility of early Miles, and in both solo and ensemble is guilty of badly articulated notes.

Sad to say, Wallington himself seems to be on the verge of dropping off to sleep throughout, and on "But George" he takes a six beat rest where for a moment I thought he had actually succeeded.

Stuart Nicholson

#### VIC LEWIS

##### TEA BREAK

(Concept VL3)

Recorded: London, 12 September 1985.

Triple Threat: *Lover Man*, *The Loneliest Monk*.

Composition: *Go Lady*; *Sunday Girl*; *Apple Pie*.

Interviewee: *Ruff 'N'*

Lewis (conductor) Peter King (sax), Bud Shank (sax), Jiggs Whigham (tbl), Barry Robinson, Gordon Keates, Peter Warner, Nigel Nash, Derek Hyams (bass), Nigel Carter, Bryan Rankine, Paul Eshelby, Bill Turner (cl), Colin Stenn, Gordon Campbell, Eddie Larkin, Andrew Fawbert (tbb), Andrew Vinter (tuba), Graham Arth, John Chambers (g), Roy Blackburn (b), Ronnie Verrell (dr), Len Walker (perc).

I REGRET TO PREDICT THAT *TEA BREAK*, unlike the original of its Bud Shank stablemate on "Concept", *Live At The Haig*, will not be an acclaimed reissue 30 years on. One would have thought that the presence of the great saxophonist, secured in the course of his acclaimed British tour last autumn, plus that of Peter King, his native rival in impassioned alto-playing, would make for a compelling album. But the catalogue of wretched and/or

tedious arrangements, and the all-too-professional support of the BBC Radio Big Band, plus that of the third soloist, one Oliver Haylen Jiggs Whigham ("to the trombone what Perlman is the violin" – sleeve note) ensure that except where it gets a bit too noisy, *Tea Break* is quite acceptable to many a Radio 2 musical wall-papering exercise. (Oh, you mean *Fred Perlman*!) It is not quite right to say this is 'easy-listening' music, though. The problem is more that of a descent into Kentenousque tastelessness, reflecting Vic Lewis' musical and personal association with that purveyor of the pretentious.

There are in fact two acceptable tracks – "Triple Threat" and the excellent Gerry Mulligan composition "Apple Pie" (good pun too). Great playing by King and Shank on the latter in particular – a pity the other charts could not be of this quality! The two Bill Holman offerings, including an overblown "Lover Man", show no advance on his pedestrian work of the '50's. But they at least are listenable to – in contrast to "The Loneliest Monk", a hideous re-working of "Blue Monk" by John Cameron that would surely have evoked one of the Master's blandest smiles. Full of big-band clichés of over-statement, it features the obligatory "Monkish" splashing on piano by either Andrew Vinter or (if one takes the sleeve literally) one Fender Rhodes. "Sunday Girl" is an excruciating exercise in bombastic balladry; feminists may be interested to note that, according to the deservedly anonymous sleeve-note, in this "melodic story of a boy and a girl, the alto is the girl and the trombone the boy".

Oh dear, this is rather harsh. There is good hard work from the two altoists And Vic Lewis, whose 50th year in the business this album celebrates, looks a very jovial bloke judging by his smiling presence in the group photo on the front.

Andy Hamilton

#### DAVID BORDEN & THE NEW MOTHER MALLARD BAND

##### ANATIDAE

(Cuneiform Records Rune 4 – distributed in Europe by AYAA 121 rue du Courlay, 51100 Reims, France)

*The Continuing Story of Counterpoint Part 5: The Continuing Story of Counterpoint Part 2: Anatidae 2a: Anatidae 1: The Continuing Story of Counterpoint Part 3: Anatidae 2b: David Borden (synths, cl p, all except TC SOC 2); Les Thummiq (sax, bar s, all except TC SOC 2); Nurit Tilles (p, synth, TC SOC 2, 3 & 5); Chop Smith (synth, TC SOC 3); Rebecca Armstrong (v, TC SOC 3); guests: David Torn (g, Anatidae 2a & 2b), David van Tighem (dr, post TC SOC 5)*

DAVID BORDEN HAS LONG BEEN ONE OF THE MORE interesting "minimalist" composers working in

that rich mushroomy shade round the feet of Glass and Reich. "Long" and "shade" are the operative words, if only to rid any notion that Borden is a mere imitator or bandwagon jumper.

Born in 1938 – a year Glass's junior, two Reich's – he has worked his own distinctive furrow all but unnoticed. The lack of prominence can be put down in part to happenstance and in large part to virtual insistence on not being taken too seriously.

Commissioned in 1973 to soundtrack Bill Friedkin's *The Exorcist*, Borden found himself cropped down to less than a minute of screen-time (and gazzumped by *Tabular Rasa*). There's a sense around that none of this bothered him unduly. John Rockwell likes to divide the New York music scene into black tie Uptown and workshirt Downtown; Borden has stayed doggedly gumboot Uppcountry, preferring to live and work in relative isolation at Ithaca. He'd certainly die rather than have you thank him academic or sad-sack 'serious' and more than a few critics (John Diliberto has been his only consistent proponent) have been put off by the whimsy. In the 1970s Borden toured with the pioneering synth band Mother Mallard's Portable Masterpiece Co (a direct precursor of the current New Mother Mallard Band); they recorded on the Earthquake label, Lameduck Publishing, titles like *Like A Duck To Water* (though there was also the Reich sound-alike *Magic For Amplified Instruments* in 1981) and, lest you thought it stopped there, *Anatidae* is the taxonomical name for all geese, swans and, natch, ducks.

Decoy duck-calls may be closer to John Zorn than Olivier Messiaen's painstaking transcriptions of birdsong but Borden's work has veered increasingly back towards conventionally-scored pieces firmly rooted in tonality. The three parts of "Anatidae" here are impressionistic, dominated by Torn's guitar and Les Thummiq's impressive sax, and punctuated with a soft background of duck-calls that is restful rather than irritating.

The real interest of the album, though, lies in the three new sections of Borden's large work "The Continuing Story of Counterpoint". Thus, if the word has meaning at all, is "minimalist" composition of the purest sort. The melodic components are scant but are built into something impressively substantial by a remarkable grasp of contrapuntal technique that melds compositional devices from further back than Bach with synthesiser technology.

Pointless to insist on Borden's originality and then indicate influences and similarities. The presence of Reichians Nurit Tilles and Edmund Nicmann (and Rebecca Armstrong, who sings on *Tablino*) suggest one obvious link. A more audible one would be with Michael Nyman with whom Borden shares an

interest in early musics and in particular with that rich polyphonic strain that went to pieces long before Mozart. Part 3 of "Counterpoint" has a vocal line with a text consisting solely of early composers' names; it's a gesture typical of Borden and with names as euphonic as Palestrina and Orlando di Lasso, a very effective one.

Each layer of the piece has its own interest. The variations of instrumentation help develop a constant flow of new effects and ideas (though there would seem to be little leeway for improvisation in the normal sense). Certainly none of it drifts into abstraction. Laurie Anderson sidekick Van Tieghem provides a bit of rhythmic muscle on the opening Part 5 (the running order is highly effective, though the numbering seems to have no real significance) but it is this track that palls most quickly. The drums insist too heavily. Elsewhere, rhythms advance and retreat from the melody lines with a subtler dramatic impact.

There can't be many albums that credit a university ornithology department but it would be a pity to overstate the jokey side of Borden's work. He seems chiefly concerned to avoid the solemnity that strikes to most "new music" ventures. It would be a shame if he succeeded at the cost of further obscurity, for this is great stuff. Order a copy if you can, just don't mention orange sauce. . .

Brian Morton

## Cecil Taylor

### LOOKING AHEAD

(Boplicity COP 030)

Recorded: New York City, 9 June 1958.

*Layak! The Glorious Step, African Vitals, O'What, Waller, Toll; Excursion On A Weekly Rail* Taylor (p), Earl Griffith (vib); Buell Neidlinger (b), Dennis Charles (dr).

## UNIT

(New World Records NW 201)

Recorded: New York City, 3-6 April 1978

*Ides, Serdab, Holiday Ex Masque*

Taylor (p), Ralphe Malik (tr); Ramsey Arden (vib), Simone (b), Ronald Shannon Jackson (dm).

THE PATH Cecil Taylor treads has never been easy. There is nothing accessible or even attractive in his music, he speaks in dense non-harmonic tongues and multi-note cascades and throughout his long career has encountered resistance to meet him on his own terms and his own artistic ground. From the very beginning Taylor's music was a *causa belli* among critics—Benny Green pronouncing that he doubted whether it was music at all, let alone jazz! At the expense of rationalising with hindsight, it is difficult to appreciate what all the fuss was about listening to *Looking Ahead*.

This was Taylor's second album—he was up and running well before Ornette had the Five

Spot—and his six original compositions still operate from within the nomenclature of bebop. While conventional chord changes were the point of departure, Taylor's voyage into atonality was always underpinned by a strict sense of form (or as Taylor called it, "Structures"), of which "Toll" is a good example. Three tempos are contrasted with different instrumental groupings from within the quartet—vibes alone, then plus bass, piano alone then bass and so on—to forge an abstract expressionism shuffling the modest group resources at his disposal. *Looking Ahead* is both an important Taylor album and an ideal entrée into his abstract world, of which *Unit*, from 20 years later, might well be considered the deep end.



*Unit* is performed by Taylor's sextet that existed for the first part of 1978, and together with 3 *Phasis* (New World NW 303) represents the high-water mark of Taylor's group recordings. The aural flagellation of "Holiday En Masque", 29 minutes 41 seconds of densely textured cacophony, slowly reveals on repeated listening many varicoloured events; swirling motifs that appear and dissolve, stormy duets and trios and even riffs. "Serdab" has the widest area of colouration, an almost pastoral beginning that finally gives way to furious inventions. Pianist and ensemble maintain a fine balance; the rapport with Jimmy Lyons and the rigorous empathy of Ronald Shannon Jackson create a degree of freedom and emotional range only surpassed by Taylor's solo work. *Unit* is dense, cerebral and demanding and it makes such demands that even in the 80s few people are prepared to give.

Stuart Nicholson

## Billy Pierce

### WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR

(Sunnyside SSC 1013)

Recorded: New York, 29/30 May 1985.

*Blue Nostalgia; Paxtonica, Color Blind; Over The Edge, William The Conqueror; Sadan Blue; We'll Be Together; Nature's Folk Song*

Pierce (ts, ss), James Williams or James 'Sid' Simmons (p), John Lockwood (b); Keith Copeland (d)

SUNNYSIDE SEEM TO HAVE A PREDILECTION for the blander sort of hard-bop. Pianist James Williams led a date featuring Bill Pierce (Sunnyside SSC1007); now it is vice versa (though with James Simmons replacing the other James on three tracks), and reservations similar to those expressed by your reviewer regarding the former apply in the present case too. *William The Conqueror* has attractions in contrast to those of *After Ego*, though; Pierce's strong playing is allowed more solo space, obviously, and the more muscular and resourceful drumming of Keith Copeland (who earned plaudits for his anchor-role in the recently-touring George Russell Orchestra) compels attention.

The latter feature helps to make the title-track (the only one for trio on the album—pity) the most rewarding. In its perfunctory theme-statement and furious execution it is reminiscent of Branford Marsalis' more daring rheemless improvisation "No Backstage Pass". But though Branford is quoted on the present sleeve claiming Pierce as his first major influence, it is not a case of Gilmour and Coltrane; comparison of the two tracks shows that Marsalis has well-outstripped his mentor, whose possession of an individual voice is uncertain.

Less successful is the account of Monk's commemoration of the Baroness Pononica Rothschild. The easy loping pace Pierce adopts does not really suit, I feel, and the number appears short of the toughness behind its graceful exterior. This highlights the main problem. Of the featured original compositions by Pierce and the pianist Donald Brown, only the former's "Sadan Blue" is more than undemanding. The modal framework which served for some of the most exciting and energetic pronouncements of an Art Blakey results here in blandness.

Andy Hamilton

## Barry Harris

### AT THE JAZZ WORKSHOP

(OJC-208; Riverside RLP-1177)

Recorded: San Francisco, 15/16 May 1960

*It's You Is Or Is You Ain't My Baby, Certain Call, Star Eyes, Mouse On The Moon, Lolita, Morning Coffee, Don't Blame Me, Waddy n You* Harris (p), Sam Jones (b), Louis Hayes (d).

I'M GLAD ANOTHER BARRY HARRIS LP HAS come my way since, first, it allows me to correct a mistake in my review of the pianist's excellent recent *For The Moment* (Uptown UP27.20). Contrary to what was there stated, "Harris in his 60s", whether "forceful, thoughtful or impassioned", is in fact only 56. When the present album was made (Harris' second as leader and first in that capacity for Riverside) he was only 30—but, as Orrin Keepnews pointed out in his typically lucid



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sleeve-note on the original, was also prematurely grey.

The second reason for your reviewer's gladness is the quality of the album. *At The Jazz Workshop* was recorded while Harris was working in Cannonball Adderley's quintet, then tasting commercial success with 'soul-funk'. He did not stay long. The spell did, however, lead to a permanent move to New York from the relative seclusion of Detroit, and to further sessions for Keepnews at Riverside. In the pianist's case, though, it seems that a personally attractive combination of diffidence and integrity has led to him not receiving the recognition that is his due.

His Powell-like attack and phrasing are heard to good effect on the tracks above. Indeed that master's influence sometimes seems pervasive, even down to the curious efforts at 'classical' pastiche echoed in the stiff *maestros* theme of "Curtain Call". Monk's influence mediated by that of Powell is also apparent, most transparently in the way the blues 'original' "Morning Coffee" brazenly incorporates the memorable repeated single-note theme of "Thelonious". Also evident are some of the drawbacks of live recording. The person clattering the coffee-cups on "Is You Is" reappears to clap in time to "Lolita", only to be abruptly silenced presumably by po-faced *maestros* of the Jazz Academic Appreciation Brotherhood, and heaven knows what horrible retribution exacted. (Not horrible enough because there he is again playing with his change on "Morning Coffee".)

But this is not a serious problem. Unspoiled highlights include a lovely "Don't Blame Me" and a lucid "Woody'n You", making the album a rewarding introduction to the earlier work of Barry Harris.

Andy Hamilton

#### NORFOLK JUBILEE QUARTET NORFOLK JUBILEE QUARTET 1927-1938

(Gospel Heritage HT 310)  
*When The Moon Goes Down, Moaning In The Land, Wonder Where The Gambling Men, When The Train Comes Along, Belives In Jesus, Pure Religion, Didn't It Rain, No Hiding Place, Standing By The Bedside Of A Nephew, You Got To Love So Good Can Use You, Way Down In Egypt Land, Jesus In The Belly Of The Whale, Free At Last, Jesus Is Making Up My Dying Bed, Great Changes To Things I Used To Do, Beulah De Beulah De Bye Bye*

THE NORFOLK JUBILEE WERE ONE OF America's most popular pre-war black vocal groups, with some 70 records released between 1921 and their break-up in 1940. The last track here, with racy guitar accompaniment and jive vocal, is entirely irreverent. As Ray Funk's detailed sleeve-note explains, the decision to sing gospel was commercially as well as spiritually motivated. Simply, singing religious songs brought more gigs, more record buyers. It was foolish not to praise the Lord.

A newspaper story, quoted here, about the fatal stabbing of the group's tenor by his girlfriend, is told with all the relish of "Frankie And Johnny": the gospel singer as gadabout, whose relationship, to quote the woman's father, "would never terminate in anything honourable". Couple that with stories of the group singing in quarter contests and you get a picture of a musical lifestyle not wholly Christian in any familiar sense. But it is for their gospel recordings that the Norfolk Jubilees will be remembered.

The group foresook what one member called "the humming and hump-hump" of conventional harmony and evolved a style in which words would be harmonized behind the

lead singer. This gives their unaccompanied singing a roomier feel, laying the foundation for the more extrovert quartets of the 40s, who in turn led to James Brown, Aretha and beyond. A first listen to this LP might suggest that the singing is too rigid. In fact the falsetto and bass leads of "Standing By The Bedside" or the harmony blues of "When The Train Comes Along" are, once you've adjusted to the idiom, every bit as emotive as later, more histrionic singers. The powerful rhythms, which filter through despite the poor quality of the rare 78s from which this LP has been remastered, remind us that even the subtlest rhythm section can be rendered redundant by vocal discipline. Gospel Heritage is to be congratulated on another enjoyably revealing collection which underlines gospel's rich pleasures.

Nick Kimberley

#### F A S T L I C K S

MEL MARTIN AND LISTEN: She Who Listens (*More MVL 15*). She who listens will hear neat but less than earth-shaking playing within safe crossover and Latin modes. Really it's music that is better used as an accompaniment to doing something else, like the ironing, or painting a ceiling or grinding out homework, than the subject of study. If you pay attention you begin to wonder what the point is, then you realise that maybe the point of the exercise is to divert you from that doubt. The sad conclusion must be that you would only go looking for this record if you didn't want to listen to it . . .

Jack Cooke

# STANLEY CLARKE

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HERBIE HANCOCK  
STEWART COPELAND  
STANLEY JORDAN  
ANGELA BOFILL



ALBUM: EPC 26984  
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DPA

**JIMMY DAWKINS** All Blues (*JSP 1102*). I saw the gig and it was a good 'un. West Side Chicago guitarist Dawkins played and sang with understated eloquence and formidable skill, backed by a hefty All-Chicago four-piece, that night at the 100 Club. Here's the album of the gig and it brings back good memories. But for those that weren't there it's a more doubtful proposition, with six songs (five of them blues standards) stretched to fill a whole 40-minute LP, and sometimes dubious sound balance which manages to lose the bass half of the time as well as submerging the vocals. But, even on old warhorses like Magic Sam's "Easy Baby" that Dawkins axe sure does ring out with authority and style. Not an essential buy unless you were there, but a release to whet one's appetite for some new studio recordings by the man.

Mike Atherton

**RANDY BRECKER & ELAINE ELIAS** Amanda (*Swan SNTP-958*). Since the days of their heavy-metal bebop and their semi-hic "Sneaking Up Behind You", the brothers Brecker have continually succumbed to the sirens of the fusion camp. Artistically they've always ended up on the rocks, and here Mr and Mrs Randal E. Brecker combine forces in an

album of such high gloss that the hairdresser and make-up girl are credited. This is studio-induced overdub fuzz, every turn, every shift has been meticulously plotted in a fastidious, confining, subordinated whole. Yawn.

Stuart Nicholson



**DUKE ELLINGTON** Classic Transcriptions (*Affinity AFSD 1032*). Two sets of radio cuts, from 1941 and 1951. Out of 17 tracks in the earlier group, there's only one composition by Duke! Some of the material is perfunctory work done on contemporary tunes, with flashes of Nanton or Webster to liven things up. The main interest in the later set is the debut recording of "Harlem Suite", though

undistinguished sound obscures the finer points of the scoring. More from the endless storehouse of Ellington.

Richard Cook

**LEE RITENOUR** Earth Run (*GRP 91021*). Ritenour has a nice feel, but a set like this doesn't make much sense of it. His guitar work gets buried in a lot of expensively funky Dave Grusin charts; only on some of the slower tunes do the musicians play music, rather than mathematics. An amble through Herbie Hancock's tune "Butterfly" is sweet enough, but does any of this mean anything to me?

Richard Cook

**BLUE BOX** Sweet Machine (*Enja 5001*) Blue Box are Reiner Winterschladen (r), Aloys Kott (b) and Peter Eisold (d & elec d), and their debut record is an unusually sly and mischievous collection of essays on the edge of funk, modal blowing and contemporary freedom. Winterschladen has a crisp, startling muted sound, and he embroiders the game the other two are posing with great relish. It doesn't sound much like anybody else, nothing is played for very long and every point is nearly argued. Recommended.

Richard Cook

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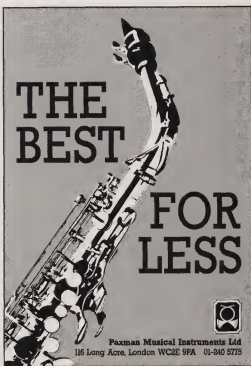
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It's a **STRONG POSSIBILITY** that the Hal Russell NRG Ensemble will make its first European appearances this year; Edward Wilkerson, though, has been making tours in Europe for nine years by now, usually with the Ethnic Heritage Ensemble, and this year, at last, with his own Eight Bold Souls. Edward has been a Chicagoan for the last 15 years. He spent his youth in Cleveland, where he began playing clarinet at age 11, baritone sax as a junior high school student ("I was the only one who would carry that thing round"), and then tenor sax. He listened hard to records – at first, Stanley Turrentine, Latin jazz, hard bop bands like Horace Silver's, big bands like Basie's and Gerald Wilson's – memorised solos, and played in school and local bands. He entered the University of Chicago in 1971, and heard the Art Ensemble of Chicago's Mandel Hall concert in January 1972: "That first time is something you always remember. It was a whole other world from what I was expecting, it took me a long time to recover." By this time he was meeting other young musicians, and he enrolled in the A.A.C.M. school, attending classes on weekends. He played in and composed for the A.A.C.M. Big Band and then played alto sax in Muhal Richard Abrams's big band.

While writing his university B.A. thesis on Renaissance music, he began studying a historical precedent for Chicago's portentous jazz cooperative: the Florentine Camerata of nearly 400 years ago, "right before the development of opera in Italy. This was a group that would get together to develop the new recitative style of music, and they called it the 'Nuovo Musica' – in whatever period, they're always calling it the New Music. The concepts they were dealing with, the idea of the music – whenever you have any kind of progression in music, it's going to be done to the interaction of musicians. If you look through history, you see it takes a certain chemistry to make the music come about – it didn't just take somebody going off in his room and writing and writing."

Like other young Chicagoans, Wilkerson found his period of studying and working with Abrams the high point of his training. "For younger musicians, you can't just learn techniques from a teacher in school, you have to learn them from being in contact with musicians who are doing them. Muhal dealt with issues like performance and orchestration – he's very

free with the knowledge he has." Playing with Abrams's band, then, "affected me so much because not only was each person on a high individual level solo-wise, they were committed to the ensemble, the idea of the big band – you can't overemphasise that."

After his university studies, Edward spent two years programming computers and playing and writing hard bop in a quintet he co-led with trumpeter Frank Walton. He also played in a remarkable quartet, Quadrisect: George Lewis, trombone, Douglas Ewart, Mwata Bowden, and Edward, woodwinds, no rhythm instruments. What was clear by then was that he was fully at home in a variety of contexts, playing all the saxophones plus clarinet, it was obvious to Edward, though, that the tenor was his favourite horn. "I love the tradition of the tenor. It's the power instrument, very deceiving if you want to make decisive statements. I used to be very much into playing loud – I liked it because you could be hard. And it's used on ballads so much."

"Each saxophone has a different quality to it. I look at it like a relationship with a woman. The baritone saxophone is like if you were married to a woman who weighed 300 pounds, and in the relationship she is the boss and you're trying to hang on – somebody who's demanding and overpowering. The alto is like a woman you can just overpower – she can't handle you. And the soprano is like a woman who's totally insane: there's no way to have relationships because the difference between you is so great. The tenor saxophone is the one that's a love relationship: you enjoy each other's company, you make love to it, and all that. It's the closest thing to a perfect relationship as far as a man and a woman. I'll bet if you did a character study on these cats who play these instruments, it'd be revealing."

So it was on tenor that Edward Wilkerson played hard bop, with guitar dazzler Lefty Dizz's band, and then on tour with soul, rock, and blues stars – Gene Chandler ("The Duke Of Earl"), Bobby Blue Bland, 50s package shows with the Shirelles and Little Anthony – in theatres and on the chitlin' circuit. It was in 1978 that Edward made a major move. Kahl El'Zabar, who plays drums and a collection of African and Latin percussion, had formed a series of bands he called the Ethnic Heritage Ensemble, and Edward joined them in time for a European journey. At first a quartet, the Ensemble has been a trio for eight years by now: Zabar, Wilkerson on woodwinds and

piano, and a second horn player, usually a woodwind man (trombonist Joseph Bowie has been the third player this year).

It was also in 1978 that Edward Wilkerson began leading his own groups, which he usually named Shadow Vignettes: "The Shadow idea is something that's mysterious and dark. I want to keep everything contrasting against each other, and I want to present varied types of music, like vignettes – I'm leaning toward shorter pieces in different settings." Usually a trio of tenorist Wilkerson, bassist Yossef ben Israel, and drummer Reggie Nicholson, Shadow Vignettes actually tended to work in up tempos and wholly extroverted material. Edward has also been arranging for big bands over the years, and suddenly, in mid-1983, Shadow Vignettes became a big band that included a string section and featured "guests" like percussionist Zabar, flautist James Newton, and actor John Toles-Bey narrating "The Legend Of Honky Tonk Bud" ("It's taken from an old jukebox toast – he said this is what they did in jail for entertainment – there are a whole bunch of them that celebrate different personalities. He adapted it from the original text, actually, the original performance was with the trio and we improvised the whole thing, so I took some of the themes we had improvised and wrote them for big band. It grew over a long period of time."

Because the individual voices are so distinctive, the Eight Bold Souls offers, to this listener, Edward's most expressive composing (hear how vivid the ensemble sounds when Bowden and Edward play clarinets together). Already this year the Eight Bold Souls have played the Moers Festival in Germany, and they're touring again early in the autumn; they're also recording their first album this year. I haven't yet mentioned Edward Wilkerson's adventures in various Douglas Ewart groups, though in fact there have been many valuable ones down through the years, especially including Ewart's Clarinet Choir, which has recorded a fine cassette tape *Red Halls* (Anawak Recordings, no catalogue number; write to Box 7987, Chicago, IL 60680, U.S.A.) And there are at least four or five Ethnic Heritage Ensemble recordings by now, too – Edward has been a very active jazzman in the 1980s. Certainly, his career and that of Hal Russell are the outstanding answers to the question, What's happened to the spirit of originality and adventure in contemporary Chicago jazz?

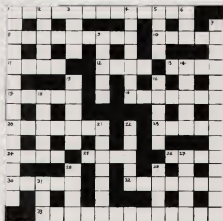
# Jazzword

BY TIM COLWELL

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH

## A C R O S S

- 1 "Ya wife stoned!" Henry's start at that information makes cocktail of Mancini drinking-song . . . or most of it. (3,4,2,4)
- 8 More than 2,240 pounds becomes Musical Educator/Monkish scribe. (7)
- 10 Long-term Dural Son. (5)
- 11 and 7 down. "R. Clooney morose, Bert!" Run her around and let Edward's tune cheer her up! (4,6,8)
- 12 Black and white make AL. (4)
- 13 Nothing at start or finish of Rollins' opus. (4)
- 17 All together for Cootie, we hear. (5)
- 19 The beginning turns part of Monk piece into boring worker. (7)
- 20 Scream it out! (7)
- 23 The lowest! (5)
- 24 Solid, earthy Hamill. (4)
- 25 Guitarist is pretty large cat! (4)
- 26 Yiddish silence. (4)
- 30 Regal Charlie . . . not to be confused with our Ted. (5)
- 32 All-round S.O.B. starts off N.O. trumpet . . . with Otis as a back-up! (1,6)
- 33 Small, coloured horn-blower. (6,3,4)



## D O W N

- 1 "E.T. blows forte, uh?" Not louder than Neal's ruse for tenors in tandem! (3,3,3,5)
- 2 and 6. Time to play regular gig? (5,3)
- 3, 21 and 16. L.R. grins at account! Well he might, on getting funds. (4,7,3)
- 4 Jimmy Wood? No, much bigger, expanded slightly, even. (7)
- 5 Old British cleric. Also one-time Redman, Luneford arranger. (4)
- 6 See 2.
- 7 See 11.

- 9 and 18. 4's Hot pinch from Duke's 'Local'. (5,5)
- 14 Sco's landowner . . . part of Birdsong. (5)
- 15 Detective-Inspector begins snooty 30s slang. (5)
- 16 See 3.
- 18 See 9.
- 21 See 3.
- 22 Pooty-sounding French-horn man. (5)
- 27 On the track of Groff. (5)
- 28 Worry stop. (4)
- 29 Part of Basie's vehicle worth £25. (4)
- 31 Sal's one, we hear? (3)

## LAST MONTH'S ANSWERS

ACROSS: 1 Under Milk Wood; 10 Racing, 12 Carter; 14 & 9 Le Vantage; 15 Friar; 17 Chops; 18 Ipanema; 20 Sonor; 22 Tanam; 23 & 25 down Mo Corb; 24 Hambro; 26 Nielsen; 28 Organ.  
DOWN: 2 Never No (Lament); 3 Em, 4 & 30 across Meet Us At The Boogie; 5 Large Raize; 6 Woolf (Phillips); 7 Ombina; 8 Buck Clayton; 11 & 19 across Gary Burton's Mallets; 13 Edsel; 16 Wire A Mouth; 19 (Mat) Mathews; 20 Skat; 21 No Bange; 27 Set, 29 Geo.

## S O N N Y R O L L I N S

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

as little — as he wishes, prepared to join in and mix it with those he considers equals, or distance himself from whatever else is going on if necessary, knowing finally that what he does is enough in itself.

The last two studio dates Rollins made in 1958 both support this new magisterialism, though in somewhat different ways. The *Newk's Time* date for Blue Note seems like a formal farewell to the New York hard-bop school within which he emerged and which he was now rapidly outgrowing. This is not to say that it isn't among Rollins' best work — indeed if I were ever forced to reduce to one Rollins album this is the one I'd keep (*yeah! — Ed*) — but it is somehow valedictory, whereas despite rather less cohesion *Soney Rollins And The*

*Contemporary Leaders* looks towards the future. Here, for the first time, is the interplay between guitar and tenor that was to distinguish the first Victor sessions (though it's not, as claimed, the first time Rollins has actually worked with a guitarist — Rene Thomas figured on the *Big Brass* album). Here also is Rollins making music with whoever was around, and reasonably comfortably despite the fact that the album took three days to record and, on the final track, his alleged equals are reduced to a desperate race to stay in the game against the tempo he sets. But he was always fond of a joke.

So by the time 1958 closed out, all the parameters which have kept Rollins in business as a major and consistent force in music were present. Maybe they just needed a little further polish, a bit more thought and reflection. Yeah, three years' worth.

## RECORD GUIDE

A NIGHT AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD is on Blue Note BLP 81581. FREEDOM SUITE was released on Riverside 12-258. SONNY ROLLINS AND THE BIG BRASS first appeared on MetroJazz E1002, later on Verve MG V 8430; what happened to it after that I know not (*it's still available on Verve, and also on CD, reviewed last month — Ed*). The Music Inn MJQ set is split: four tracks appear on MetroJazz E1011 (completed by two Harold Land tracks), two tracks on THE MODERN JAZZ QUARTET AT MUSIC INN, VOLUME TWO on Atlantic 1299 (Vol. 1 refers to the MJQ's 1956 performances at this venue). NEWK'S TIME is on Blue Note BLP 84001; SONNY ROLLINS AND THE CONTEMPORARY LEADERS was on Contemporary C3564; Boplicity have reissued it on COP 018.



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### Critics . . .

YOU DON'T HAVE to be a critic (although who isn't?) to know that writing a bad (i.e. negative) review of a performance or record is much easier than writing a good or complimentary one. And if you're using the capsule format designed to tag on short reviews at the end of the record section, you can pass on the music altogether and just take a couple of cheap shots at the musician. My point: there is no reason why Andy Hamilton should like Donald Byrd's 1961 Blue Note recording *At The Half Note Cafe* (Wire 30), that notwithstanding, Donald Byrd will always be a major voice in the development and evolution of that Afro-American music we call jazz.

I guess Hamilton didn't have time to research the many and varied accomplishments Donald Byrd has made to the music while ensuring the legacy and rights of its creators. Let me hip him to a few Donald Byrd pioneered a new fusion form that included voices rooted in the gospel tradition and incorporated modern vocalese and scat singing. He wrote magazine pieces instructing musicians in the value of understanding the mechanics of their instruments and their bodies and encouraging them to master all musical schools - classical, R & B, folk, etc - and to play in different formats. He saw in the 50s how his colleagues were getting burned by record companies and agents. Herbie Hancock said, "Donald came around and warned everyone, 'Keep the rights to your own compositions!' He produced the Blackbyrds, a funk group consisting of his students at Howard University, as an object lesson in the music business. Later, he would undertake a law degree so he could fight his own battles."

Perhaps his greatest achievements, however, have been in the field of education. Recognising the racist omission of Afro-American musics in the curriculum of schools and colleges across the US, he inspired the creation of Black Music studies at dozens of campuses. He holds a PhD in music education and sits on the board of the Black Music Association.

Although personally off the scene for several years due to health problems, Donald Byrd is touring again in a bop setting and feels he is playing stronger and faster than ever. And lest things get too slow, he has become a PhD candidate in physiology in the hopes of developing a new discipline akin to sports medicine to deal with the special physical and

emotional problems encountered by musicians.

Bruce Rosensweet, Toronto

### . . . they know nothing . . .

HAVING SUBSCRIBED to your publication from the first issue, and having listened to (and occasionally played) jazz for almost 50 years, I was disturbed and saddened to read a review in your Soundcheck column in the September issue. I refer to the comments of one Tony Hettrington on the Barney Kessel LP *Let's Cook*.

Mr. H. is, of course, fully entitled to label this as "gutless music" and "faintly ridiculous". I would always defend his right to express such an opinion, if it is an honest one. But if he had also listened to Messrs Chestnut, Farrow, Ellis, Botrell, Montgomery and their contemporaries, then he might be regarded as sufficiently competent to judge Barney Kessel and his 1957 colleagues, all of whom are, or were, fine jazz musicians by any standards.

May I suggest that if you include reviews of reissues of such vintage (I've had this record for years), it would be appropriate to seek more constructive criticism from someone who can at least offer intelligent discerning comment, not merely pointless bigoted prejudice. In my humble opinion, this review was quite frankly not worthy of your otherwise excellent publication.

Bob Charlesworth, North Humberside

### . . . really nothing . . .

RICHARD COOK'S PIECE on Keith Tippett's *A Loose Kite* was definitely out of order. Okay, so he didn't like it. That's his prerogative. What grates is his sour dismissal of that 'generation' of British players and Keith Tippett in particular. From an album which he fails to enjoy he allows himself to leap astride what looks suspiciously like a ready saddled hobby horse.

We're told Tippett is "tirelessly morose", sometimes "inchoate" and leaves "an impression of terrible weariness". Has Richard listened to *September Energy*, *Unlabeled Ramblances*, *Magician* or *In Focus*? Not very clearly if he can trot out such stuff as I've quoted. In what I take to be an attempt at a compliment, albeit backhanded, we hear that Tippett makes "only the most meagre concessions to his audience". As someone who has promoted him on a number of occasions in Exeter, whatever the conces-

sions, he has always drawn audiences and they always enquire about return visits. Try telling the packed house that witnessed Keith's arrangements for the 12-piece "Cause" that he was morose, weary or inchoate and you'd have been lynched.

It'll be evident by now that I place Keith Tippett at the opposite end of the creative continuum to your editor. The last comment is best left with Keith Tippett himself. In the words of an album he recorded in the 60s and which fittingly contains three players who also appear on *Loose Kite*, his message, Richard, may well have been "Dedicated to you . . . but you weren't listening".

Martin Philips, Devonair Radio

TO SAY THAT Keith Tippett is morose and his music sticky is a reflection not on the man or his music but merely evidence of your reviewer's waning critical faculties.

This music is intense and difficult. It demands and rewards application, effort and most important an open mind on the part of the listener and until your reviewer is possessed of this talent and can concentrate to the required degree, it is best that he refrain from "reviewing records" (in this case nothing more than character assassination) and restrict himself to feeding the birds.

J. Gardiner, London N16

### Jah

WERE NOW HAS a column for Latin music, one for African music and one for noise, but it has nothing about reggae. The interest in this music shown by such people as Jack DeJohnette, Oliver Lake, Leo Smith etc is proof of the value of this music and it deserves serious consideration. I therefore suggest a monthly column on the subject.

Declan O'Driscoll, Ireland

### Beresford

READERS WHOSE CURIOSITY WAS aroused by Mr Ilk's John Zorn interview (*Wire* 31) would look in vain for details of J.Z.'s "18 minute tour-de-force" in the appended discography.

Perhaps I can help. It's called "Godard". It's on a record called *Godard Ca Vous Chante* on the nato record label. Their address: 1 rue des Tanneurs, 72340 Chantenay-Villedieu, France.

Steve Beresford, London



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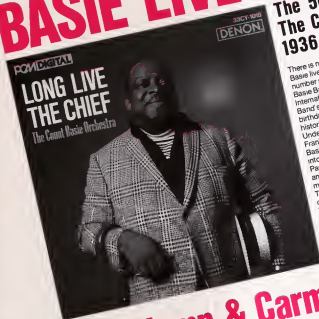
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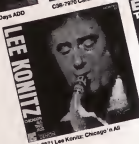
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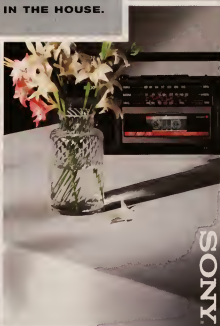
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